Daily Report

Near East & South Asia

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FBIS-NES-96-013 *19 January 1996*

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Yemeni-Eritrean Conflict

Yemeni Presidential Adviser Visits Africa on Conflict

JN1801201996 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 18 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Brother 'Abd-al-Salam al-'Ansi, adviser at the Presidential Office, returned to Sanaa today after visiting several African states.

In a statement to the YEMENI NEWS AGENCY, SABA', brother 'Abd-al-Salam al-'Ansi said that during the visits, he conveyed messages from brother Lieutenant General President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih to the Sudanese, Kenyan, Ugandan, Tanzanian, and South African presidents dealing with relations between our country and their countries. The messages, he said, also deal with developments resulting from Eritrea's occupation of the Yemeni al-Hanish al-Kabir island.

Al-'Ansi asserted that the leaders of these states expressed understanding of Yemen's position and praised the wise method of the brother president and the Yemeni political leadership in dealing with the dispute and trying to solve it peacefully. They also voiced their readiness to cooperate to solve the dispute and correct matters, he said.

Al-'Ansi also said that the visits gave him the opportunity to meet with Yemeni expatriates in these states and to explain developments in their homeland. The expatriates stressed support for the political leadership to defend the sovereignty and independence of Yemeni territories.

Eritrea Said To Use Israeli Gunboats in Island Seizure

JN1901115896 Manama WAKH in Arabic 0700 GMT 19 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Manama, 19 Jan (WAKH)—'Abd-al-Karim al-Iryani, Yemeni deputy prime minister and foreign minister, has accused Eritrean forces of deploying gunboats supplied by Israel in their aggression against and occupation of al-Hanish al-Kabir island. He asserted that prior to the Eritrean attack, Yemen did not have a permanent and fortified military presence on the islands of al-Hanish al-Kabir, al-Hanish al-Saghir, and Zuqar.

In an interview with the Bahraini newspaper AKHBAR AL-KHALIJ today, al-Iryani said that in settling the dispute with Eritrea, Yemen gives priority to negotiations, and that resorting to force will be the last choice. He added that these negotiations are to demarcate the Yemeni-Eritrean maritime borders.

He said that in the past, the Eritreans were not ready to discuss this issue. However, following mediation efforts, they have begun to be persuaded to hold negotiations to demarcate maritime borders and exploit the fisheries.

Al-Iryani said Yemen succeeded in overcoming the consequences of the second Gulf war in its relations with the Gulf countries, and that Kuwait has made positive signs in this respect. The natural thing for Yemen, he said, would be to be a member of the Gulf Cooperation Council by virtue of its geographical and demographic location. However, he continued, applying for membership is not possible.

Regarding the Middle East peace process, al-Iryani said Yemen rejects any relations with Israel unless peace with Syria is realized. As for the situation in Yemen, al-Iryani said the possibility of former southern Yemeni President 'Ali Nasir Muhammad returning as the head of the government in Yemen is nothing more than a rumor.

On the dispute between the two members of the ruling coalition in Yemen, al-Iryani confirmed that there are differences between the General People's Congress and the Yemeni Reform Grouping regarding economic reform policies. The Yemeni Government, he added, is currently in the process of deciding which of the two viewpoints is more sound. Al-Iryani called on the Reform Grouping to make a clearcut choice between participating in the government or joining the opposition.

Yemen Official: Hanish Island Invasion Challenge to 'Arab Security'

MM1801143496 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 18 Jan 96 p 5

[Interview with Ghalib Jamil, Yemeni foreign under secretary for political affairs, by unidentified correspondent in London; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [AL-HAYAH] We know that there is a strong friendship between Yemen and Eritrea. What is behind the unexpected conflict over Greater Hanish island?

[Jamil] The Eritrean leadership's invasion of Greater Hanish island, which belongs to a friendly state, has baffled all observers of Yemeni-Eritrean relations and exacerbated the feelings of the two friendly peoples.

Yemen's right over all the islands situated in its territorial waters has never been in any doubt, and does not require proof. And yet, after Eritrea's independence, Yemen told the Eritrean Government directly of its desire to resolve the dispute over maritime borders

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Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz is the beginning of a new era in the close relations between the two countries. No one can deny that Yemen and the Kingdom [of Saudi Arabia] are the cornerstones of the Arabian Peninsula's and the Gulf's security and safety. If this fact is not taken into account, there will be a mad rush of those bent on harming our Arab nation, and the foxes will become lions in the absence of Arab solidarity.

The Eritrean challenge to Arab security is not innocent and has not come suddenly. It is part of a series of challenges aimed at harming Arab security and putting it to the test.

Eritrean Coverage of Conflict Over Islands

WA1901050096

For further reportage of the Eritrean-Yemeni confrontation over the Hanish Islands in the Red Sea, including official Eritrean Foreign Ministry statements, please see the East Africa section of the Sub-Saharan Africa DAILY REPORT.

Inter-Arab Affairs

Hamas, Lebanese Organization Denounce U.S. Jailing of 'Abd-al-Rahman

NC1801201296 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Arabic 1730 GMT 18 Jan 96

[Report by Muhammad Bishqar in Beirut]

[FBIS Translated Text] The life sentence passed by a U.S. court on Shaykh 'Umar 'Abd-al-Rahman has met with widespread condemnation in Palestinian and Lebanese circles.

Abu-Ahmad 'Isam, spokesman for Islamic Jihad in Palestine, today denounced the U.S. court's action, saying that it is does injustice to all Muslims. He added that the U.S. Administration does not hesitate to make unjust rulings against all who disagree with its policies. He urged the Americans to release Shaykh 'Umar 'Abd-al-Rahman immediately.

Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] distributed a statement in Beirut today denouncing the sentence of Shaykh 'Umar 'Abd-al-Rahman. It said that the connived verdicts that the Americans issue against Islamists demonstrate the extent of the hate that the U.S. Administration feels for the Islamic movements and all those who demand their rights and refuse to submit to the Americans.

Hamas called on the United States to end its orchestrated conspiracies against Islam and the Muslims and to release Shaykh 'Umar 'Abd-al-Rahman and all other Islamists from U.S. jails.

The Beirut Ulema Committee strongly condemned the U.S. jailing of Shaykh 'Abd-al-Rahman. It issued a statement saying that U.S. courts have no right to pass unjust sentences on Islamists, who are resisting global arrogance and refusing to submit to the Great Satan's hegemony. The committee called on the Islamic nation to move to seriously confront the U.S. verdict.

Late last night a court in New York sentenced Shaykh 'Umar 'Abd-al-Rahman and most of his followers to life imprisonment on charges of waging a terrorist war against the United States.

Palestinian Affairs

'Arafat Appoints Attorney Governor of Jerusalem

TA1801173996 Jerusalem AL-NAHAR in Arabic 18 Jan 96 p 7

[Report by Muhammad Khalaf]

[FBIS Translated Text] Jerusalem — President Yasir 'Arafat has issued an order appointing attorney Jamil 'Uthman Nasir as governor of Jerusalem. AL-NAHAR has learned that the areas included at present in the governorate are: al-'Ayzariyah, eastern al-Sawahirah, al-Za'im, Abu-Dis, and al-Shaykh Sa'd. Some 55,00 inhabitants live in these areas.

In accordance with the agreements between the Palestinian Authority and Israel, it is expected that in February or March the governorate will expand to include areas extending from 'Anata to Mukhmas. Eventually, this area will be part of the Jerusalem governorate.

This came in statements by the governor to newsmen during the evacuation of the so-called Civil Administration offices in Abu-Dis, which will serve as the governorate's headquarters.

Nasir said that this area was originally part of the B area, but that the Israelis procrastinated in withdrawing from it on the determined date. Palestinian pressure, however, forced them to do so.

'Arafat Appointment of Jerusalem Governor Called 'Contentious Issue'

TA1801202896 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 18 Jan 96

[Talk between anchorman Hayim Yavin, in the studio, Arab affairs correspondent Ehud Ya'ari, at the National Palace Hotel in East Jerusalem, and Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert — live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Yavin] Our Arab affairs correspondent Ehud Ya'ari has just informed us that

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Palestinian Authority [PA] Chairman Yasir 'Arafat intends to appoint a governor for the Jerusalem District. The designated governor is Jamil 'Uthman, a senior Fatah activist. The governor's headquarters will be located in the former Civil Administration building in Abu-Dis. The appointment has been delayed on account of protests lodged by senior Orient House officials, who see this as undermining their status. Our correspondent Ehud Ya'ari is at the National Palace Hotel. Ehud, what is the significance of this appointment?

[Ya'ari] Good evening, Hayim. I must begin by saying that at this stage my information is based on one source. This is a good source that has never let us down in the past. The source claims that 'Arafat indeed intends to appoint a governor for the Jerusalem District prior to the Palestinian elections. The Jerusalem District in the Palestinian autonomy comprises a relatively large area outside the municipal boundaries of Jerusalem which was annexed by Israel. There is a serious argument regarding this issue with Faysal al-Husayni and his associates from the Orient House, who in effect, consider this as an ouster and a nullification of their authority with regard to Jerusalem. This is a contentious issue, and I have not managed to clarify any additional details in the 30 minutes that have elapsed since I received the news. There, nevertheless, seems to be a possibility that 'Arafat really intends to carry out this move now. [passage omitted]

[Yavin] There clearly is some degree of contention within the Palestinian camp, mainly between Faysal al-Husayni and 'Arafat; however, does this appointment conform with the Oslo agreements?

[Ya'ari] Until now, 'Arafat has appointed governors on his behalf for all the West Bank districts vacated by the IDF [Israel Defense Forces]. This was the case in Nabulus, Tulkarm, Ramallah, and so forth. As far as 'Arafat is concerned, as soon as the Civil Administration building in Abu-Dis — which is outside the Jerusalem municipal limits annexed by Israel — was vacated, he can appoint a governor for all those areas. This step, if it is indeed implemented, is designed to kill two birds with one stone, and I would like to stress that up until now, to the best of my knowledge, no official decree has been issued on this matter. The intention is primarily to force Israel to accept the appointment of a governor for the Jerusalem District, even if Israel is opposed to the governor's having any authority inside Jerusalem, and second to clip the wings of the officials at Orient House, something that has been 'Arafat's goal for a long time.

[Yavin] Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert is here in the studio. Mr. Mayor, what is your reaction to this report.

[Olmert] We must understand that this is a planned provocation designed to underscore the fact that from election day onwards, 'Arafat will have a standing in Jerusalem, the capital of Israel. With all due respect....

[Yavin, interrupting] That, however, at the expense of Faysal al-Husayni.

[Olmert] Their quarrel interests me very little, and I do not consider it important. One must understand that with the agreement of the Israeli Government, as part of the elections process, Jerusalem, including its eastern part, will become a voting district. When one speaks about the Jerusalem District in 'Arafat's terms, one is also referring to areas that are under the express sovereignty of the State of Israel and part of the city of Jerusalem. This is a provocation, which from 'Arafat's viewpoint is designed to continue the process that the elections will start, or in other words, to create a reality in which the Israeli Government accepts the establishment of an official, political, and publicly recognized status for the PA in Jerusalem. I am convinced that the Israeli prime minister cannot remain indifferent to this announcement. In my opinion, it constitutes a blatant violation of the agreement....

[Yavin, interrupting] What can the Israeli Government do?

[Olmert] Tell 'Arafat that this is a violation of the agreement because the agreement between Israel and the PA stipulates that the latter has no standing in Jerusalem and will not undertake any activities in the city. [passage omitted]

[Later on in the newscast, Ahmad al-Tibi, PA Chairman Yasir 'Arafat's adviser, reacts to the report. Al-Tibi says: "The report is not true. Attorney Jamil 'Uthman, who is my friend, was appointed a governor in the Interior Ministry approximately one year ago, just as many governors and directors were appointed by the Interior Ministry over the past 18 months. He does not fulfill any official role as Jerusalem governor. He was not appointed governor, and there is no intention of appointing a governor for Jerusalem. As you know, the villages of Abu-Dis and al-'Ayzariyah are in the Jerusalem area, and they are under the control and authority of the PA as part of Area B, and are under the administrative purview of the PA. There is no intention to appoint anyone, including Attorney Jamil 'Uthman, governor of Jerusalem."

[Toward the end of the newscast, Faysal al-Husayni is reported to have reacted by saying: "Orient House does not intervene in the considerations of Yasir 'Arafat, even with regard to the issue of appointing a governor for

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Jerusalem. Al-Husayni stressed that his relations with Yasir 'Arafat were very good."]

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 1900 GMT on 18 January reports that "PA Chairman Yasir 'Arafat's bureau and other PA officials hastened this evening to catagorically deny the report on Israeli television that 'Arafat intended to appoint a Palestinian governor for Jerusalem. 'Arafat's adviser Ahmad al-Tibi was among those issuing denials. Our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem clarifies that it appears that someone misinterpreted the appointment of attorney Jamil 'Uthman as the Palestinian Interior Ministry official in charge of the villages of Abu-Dis and al-'Ayzariyah in East Jerusalem. It was stressed to our correspondent that the PA had no intention of appointing a governor for East Jerusalem. It seems that the report originates from a local Jerusalem radio station which asked for the reaction of Deputy Jerusalem Mayor Shmu'el Me'ir, who belongs to the National Religious Party, to the alleged appointment of the governor. From here, the issue snowballed in the media until it was reported by Israeli television. The reports have subsequently been denied."]

Al-Husayni Denies Talks on Jerusalem Under Way in Europe

JN1801153196 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1200 GMT 18 Jan 96

[Interview with Faysal al-Husayni, Palestinian official in charge of Jerusalem affairs, in Jerusalem, by Shirin Abu-'Aqilah, in the studio; date not given; from the "Today's Events" program—live or recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Abu-'Aqilah] Faysal al-Husayni, official in charge of the Jerusalem file: Several Israeli officials have revealed that secret negotiations are under way in Europe between the Israeli and Palestinian sides on the final status of Jerusalem. What is your comment?

[Al-Husayni] As far as I know, there have been several meetings here and there to sound out views. However, formal negotiations on this issue have not started yet. There are several Israeli proposals for talks that were made individually by academicians. But negotiations have not started yet. Yes, the two sides are sounding out views, but there are no negotiations.

[Abu-'Aqilah] So you are denying press reports that negotiations are under way in Europe?

[Al-Husayni] There are no negotiations. As I told you, there are attempts to sound out views at several places. We are ready to listen to any proposal. However, we are not ready to start negotiations unless there is an official side behind this.

[Abu-'Aqilah] These meetings are only preparations...

[Al-Husayni] You can say they are preparations for the real negotiations.

[Abu-'Aqilah] Which will begin in May.

[Al-Husayni] God willing. [passage omitted]

PLO Official Franji Sees Elections Leading to Stability

AU0301113596 Cologne Deutschlandfunk Network in German 0549 GMT 3 Jan 96

[Telephone interview with PLO Representative 'Abdallah Franji, in Bonn, by Friedbert Meurer, in Cologne — live]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Meurer] On 20 January, the Palestinians will for the first time elect their own, free parliament, the Palestinian Council. However, the preparations for these elections have been criticized by Carl Lindbom, who heads the group of EU observers. He has above all criticized the fact that the election campaign is too short. He says that 'Arafat personally has arbitrarily increased the number of the members of the council, even though this is the task of the Central Election Commission. I want to talk about the elections in Palestine, the preparations and the criticism voiced with the PLO representative in Bonn, 'Abdallah Franji. Good morning, Mr. Franji.

[Franji] Good morning, Mr. Meurer.

[Meurer] Mr. Franji, will those candidates who do not come from the PLO be at a disadvantage?

[Franji] These problems have arisen because, basically, there are very few candidates. Of course, there have occasionally been certain differences between people who come from outside and people who are to represent the Palestinians on the council. But on the whole, developments are normal. I was there for some time recently and I saw what was going on. Many Palestinians who have lived under occupation for 28 years want to be actively involved. Since 88 people for the West Bank and the Gaza Strip are not many, the election campaign is very tough.

[Meurer] If I understand you correctly, the two groups that you are talking about are those who lived in the territories under Israeli occupation on the one hand, and those who have lived abroad on the other. What are the differences?

[Franji] The differences are these: They have absolutely different experiences. The Palestinians who lived abroad conducted the resistance struggle, the armed struggle, from outside. They also lived in other Arab countries.

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The others offered passive resistance in the occupied territories. Their experiences are different; they may be tougher, but they are also less experienced regarding political tactics and political work. In these points, certain differences have emerged, which does not mean, however, that they have led to a division. I think this is an experience that the Palestinians are having now, one that other liberation movements that conducted the struggle from outside have had, too.

[Meurer] In view of these differences, is the Swedish EU election observer's criticism justified?

[Franji] Granted, we have taken certain measures here and there....

[Meurer, interrupting] Which ones are you talking about?

[Franji] Let us say, there is our inexperience with such a situation. We are not in Sweden. This is the first time for 28 years that we have held elections in the occupied territories, the first time in our history. Such elections were held before 1967 under the Egyptian administration, but they were not as free as today, nor were they observed with so much attention as they are today.

[Meurer] What measures do you mean that you personally do not find quite in order?

[Franji] Well, the time span is so short that we are occasionally forced to compromise. A Swedish or EU or U.S. observer just cannot understand such compromises, which is why there is such criticism. But I think it is very good for us to be criticized, so we are careful to make sure the elections really are free.

[Meurer] The elections will be held on the basis of the majority vote; in other words, only those who win their constituency will get a seat in parliament. This will in most cases be the PLO candidate. Did you choose the wrong electoral law?

[Franji] No, it is not the PLO that is running in the elections. The PLO consists and will continue to consist of different organizations. Various organizations and political parties will take part in the elections. The largest organization is Al-Fatah, which leads the PLO, and of course, Al-Fatah has more opportunities, it has the biggest chance of winning these elections.

[Meurer] But, excuse me, Mr. Franji, there are parties outside the PLO.

[Franji] The only political party outside the PLO that is not so very resolved to take part in the elections is Hamas and Jihad Islami. We have tried to involve Hamas in these elections, but they are pursuing a certain tactic — saying yes now and saying no then; saying that they are planning to nominate specific candidates and then saying that they have not appointed a candidate. I think that they are pursuing this tactic because the Hamas people have realized that if they run in the elections, they will not get more than 80 percent. [sentence as heard] This would not be a good result for them. That is probably why they are pursuing this tactic.

[Meurer] Why this dual strategy of Hamas to boycott the elections on the one hand, but, on the other, to have individual officials run in the elections?

[Franji] As I said earlier, the Hamas people obviously do not want to face the fact that they will not win these elections.

[Meurer] That would explain a boycott on principle.

[Franji] No, I do not think so. If they boycotted the elections now, it would mean that they would be isolating themselves, would not have a future, and would have to work outside the law, and this is not what they want. This would lead to a confrontation between the elected council and the Hamas movement. Hamas wants to avoid this, and we would not want such a development, either. I believe, therefore, that it would be more sensible and better for Hamas to face the elections and to help shape Palestinian democracy, so that they can profit from it.

[Meurer] Do you think that the elections, under the circumstances that we have just described, can lead to pacification between the two large Palestinian groups?

[Franji] Definitely. I am confident that these elections will lead to a certain stabilization, and clarify the relationship between the Palestinian organizations, and that after the elections, no one can claim, as they have done, that the elected members of the council do not represent the Palestinian people. I think this is a good chance for the Palestinian people inside and outside Palestine to form a whole, so that eventually these 88 people can join our 450 people of the PLO to form a Palestinian national council, which should represent all Palestinians and would allow us to shape the Palestinians' future through the elected council and the PLO.

[Meurer] Thank you, Mr. Franji. Goodbye.

Security Preparations for Palestinian Election Day Outlined

TA1801152596 Gaza AL-HAYAH AL-JADIDAH in Arabic 17 Jan 96 p 2

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Occupied Jerusalem, QUDS PRESS — Major General Nasr Yusuf has said that

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the Palestinian security forces and police have made preparations to face "the worst possibilities" for the sake of maintaining security, order, and tranquillity in the Palestinian National Authority areas on the day of Palestinian elections.

At a meeting two days ago with a team of Israeli observers, Maj. Gen. Yusuf explained that police personnel will be deployed without weapons and without wearing police uniforms in areas C and in occupied Jerusalem.

Maj. Gen. Yusuf pointed out that members of the Palestinian Preventive Security Service will participate in preserving security and order on election day, while members of the Presidency Guard will protect the Arab delegations monitoring the elections.

Maj. Gen. Yusuf emphasized that there are no fears that Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] might disrupt the electoral process. He expressed his hope that the Israeli army will succeed in preventing Jewish settlers from attempts to impede or harm the Palestinian elections and their order.

He added that the Palestinian security forces have taken into consideration the possibility that agents of and collaborators with the Israeli intelligence service might try to disrupt and hamper the electoral process. He said: "We will intensify surveillance over those agents and adopt preventive measures against anyone whom we suspect." [passage omitted]

Hamas Leader on Election Stance; Position Seen as 'Dilemma'

TA1801221696 Jerusalem JMCC PRESS SERVICE in English 18 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] [passage omitted] Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] issues leaflets asking Palestinians to boycott the upcoming elections, the movement's leaders in Gaza are denying that the leaflets are issued by Hamas and are affirming their commitment to the agreement reached with the PA [Palestinian Authority] in Cairo last month. [sentence as received] In that agreement, Hamas promised to refrain from asking people to boycott the elections. This Tuesday [16 January], Hamas issued a leaflet in Gaza reaffirming that it is boycotting the elections and asking the masses to do the same. At the same time the movement promised to avoid using force to torpedo the elections.

"Because the autonomy elections are a reinforcement of the agreements signed in isolation of the Palestinian people's will" this Tuesday's leaflet asserted "we have decided to boycott these elections and call upon our Palestinian people to boycott it." Hamas called the PA's attempts to persuade the opposition to participate in the elections "misleading". "Holding these elections does not mean that the Palestinian Authority is keen on democracy in any way."

Hamas leader in Gaza Sayyid Abu-Musamih said that the leaflet does not represent Hamas. "Any leaflet that agrees with the agreement we reached with the authority is the only position representing the official Hamas position," he explained. Abu-Musamih said that Hamas is not asking people to boycott the elections.

Bi'r Zayt University professor Ziyad Abu-'Amr, an expert in Islamic movements says there are small trends within Hamas issuing leaflets which don't necessarily represent the movement's general stream.

Abu-Musamih admits that Hamas is in a "damned if you and damned if you don't" situation. "From in a political-strategic point of view it is wrong to participate in the elections, but if we look at issues of daily life it is wrong not to participate. But the strategic is what is at heart" he said.

Abu-'Amr said Hamas is in a serious dilemma. If it had participated "it would damage its credibility and lose its reputation as a hard-line opposition to the agreements. It would lose its reason d'etre. And if it doesn't participate it will lose its ability to be effective in Palestinian politics and society which it aims to Islamize and lead." In the end, Abu-'Amr believes, "Hamas will find itself forced to deal with an authority and council it did not participate in forming; rather, it will acquiesce to its policies."

The decision to boycott was the lesser of two evils for Hamas Abu-'Amr added. "It aims to retain the unity of the movement which is more important than the elections and the legislative council."

Up until the assassination of Yahya 'Ayyash, Hamas was in compliance with the agreement reached with the PA in Cairo. But his demise pushed Hamas to take a stronger line against the elections, not only boycotting but asking people to boycott. On Saturday a number of religious and pro-Hamas candidates will be running under an independent banner. The question that remains is: Will pro-Hamas voters choose these candidates? And the only way to know is to wait and see. [passage omitted]

Israeli Official Says Jerusalem Voters Not To Lose Rights

JN1801173396 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1400 GMT 18 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Oren Shahor, coordinator of Israeli occupation activities in the Palestinian territories,

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has said that Jerusalem citizens who will take part in the Palestinian elections will not lose their social rights. This came during his meeting with Mahmud 'Abbas, Abu Mazin, head of the Central Elections Committee. During the meeting, the two sides agreed on the disputed special technical arrangements dealing with the presidential and legislative elections in occupied Jerusalem and Hebron. The two sides also agreed that members of the National Authority maintain order at the polls in the presence of inspectors from the National Authority and Hebron Municipality.

Israeli Statement Promises Protection for Jerusalem Voters

JN1901080296 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0600 GMT 19 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Yo'el Singer, Israeli Foreign Ministry legal adviser, has stated that the Israeli Government will guarantee the safety of the Palestinian voters in Jerusalem on Saturday [20 January] while they are on their way to the ballot boxes.

In a press statement he sent to Voice of Palestine, Yo'el Singer said that the rights of the city's inhabitants will not be harmed if they participate in the elections.

In the press statement, Singer said that over the past month, many statements have been made by persons who do not represent the Israeli Government, threatening Jerusalemites that their status could be harmed if they participate in the elections. Singer added: In the name of the Israeli Government, I confirm that the agreement between the PLO and the Israeli Government stipulates that the inhabitants of the holy city should be allowed to freely vote without their rights being harmed as a result of this. He added that the Israeli police will protect the inhabitants who will vote outside the holy city. The Israeli police will also facilitate the arrival of the voters to the post office bureaus in the occupied city of Jerusalem.

The statement says that the Israeli police will do all it can to safeguard security in the holy city and the safety of the inhabitants, voters, and observers.

'Arafat Challenger Khalil Views Election Goals

AU1801144096 Vienna DIE PRESSE in German 8 Jan 96 p 8

[Report on interview with Samiha Khalil, Palestinian presidential candidate, by Susanne Knaul in Tel Aviv; date not given: "Samiha Khalil: Emotions, Dreams, and a Little Bit of Reality"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Tel Aviv — [passage omitted] In 1965 Samiha Khalil founded the family organization "In Ash el-Usra" ("Helping our People"), which she has been heading since that time. "In Ash el-Usra" is what is considered the largest Palestinian women's and family organization. Khalil's political career also started in the year the family center was founded: In 1965, she was elected as a member of the PLO National Council. Even if she should not win the upcoming elections, she would be allowed to remain a member of the Palestinian parliament-in-exile. "The two parliaments will merge sooner or later anyway," she hopes. "Then I will at least be a member of parliament."

She is very vague about the kind of policy she would pursue: "I am for peace and the two-state solution, but the Oslo agreement must be modified to a certain extent," she said, mentioning Jerusalem, the refugees, and the settlers.

All these issues will be discussed during the peace talks in May, which she wants to "attend by all means." A solution to the refugee problem must be found within the autonomous region. "A return to Akko or Haifa is out of the question." Thus, what are the differences vis-a-vis 'Arafat's policy? "I am not running against a person," she said. "However, I believe that I can better represent the people who are disadvantaged, in prison, whose land has been expropriated, whose trees have been felled, and whose children are starving." [passage omitted]

'Arafat's Opponent in Elections Warns: 'War Is Coming'

AU1901095096 Vienna ORF Television Network in German 2100 GMT 18 Jan 96

[Report on interview with Samiha Khalil, candidate in Palestinian presidential elections, by Ben Siegenreich; place and date not given — recorded; Khalil speaks in English with simultaneous translation in German]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Announcer] On Saturday [20 January], the Palestinians are experiencing their first taste of democracy in the areas handed over by Israel. In the Gaza strip, parts of the West Bank, and East Jerusalem, they are permitted to vote for their own parliament. This representative chamber has 88 seats. There are more than 600 candidates. At the same time, a kind of president is being elected and this chairman of the autonomy is bound to be Yasir 'Arafat. But one old lady wants to see to it that he does not get all the votes.

[Siegenreich] This is the woman who dares to topple a national symbol — Samiha Khalil, 72 years old, five children, 10 grandchildren. Why is she running against Yasir 'Arafat?

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[Khalil] Each day is worse than the previous one. When I saw the provisions of the Oslo agreement, there were many, many things that I did not agree with. My people do not agree with them, either. So I said to myself: I have to go for election.

[Siegenreich] Would she revoke the agreement with the Israelis?

[Khalil] Not all of it. First, I would discuss the independent state, full independence. We want borders. In the first stage of the peace process, I would not be negotiating on electricity or education. I would first negotiate an independent state and its borders.

[Siegenreich] Samiha Khalil's headquarters are in the small town of [name indistinct]. Here, for 30 years she has been running a charity that now has over 200 employees. Attached to it is a museum of Palestinian folklore. The iron lady is a long-standing member of the Palestinian National Council, a kind of parliament-in-exile. She claims that she was arrested by the Israelis several times in the 1970s. Therefore she has decided to run for elections late and, compared with Yasir 'Arafat, her resources are very modest. What does she think of her rival 'Arafat?

[Khalil] He is not a bad man. He is a good man. He is a hero and he has served our people. But this policy of small steps with Israel cannot continue.

[Siegenreich] Samiha Khalil does not want to condemn the terror murders by Hamas. First, one must eliminate the reasons behind them.

[Khalil] They force us to throw bombs and rocks. We do not want to do it. We are peaceful people.

[Siegenreich] On Saturday, she wants to rally the protest voters behind her; those for whom autonomy is not enough.

[Khalil] War is coming. Among my people, things are coming to the boil. I know my people. Everyone should know that, if there is no law and justice for all the people, war will come.

[Siegenreich] What percentage of the vote would please her?

[Khalil] Twenty percent.

PA Cadres From Algeria, Saudi Arabia To Enter Territories

TA1801152396 Jerusalem AL-NAHAR in Arabic 17 Jan 96 p 4

["Exclusive" report]

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman, AL-NAHAR Office — AL-NAHAR has learned from sources in the Palestinian Embassy that the Palestinian Authority [PA] recently obtained the consent of the Israeli authorities to bring in 47 of its cadres from Algeria and Saudi Arabia.

The sources added that the Israeli Government promised the PA that it will allow it to bring in thousands of its cadres from the diaspora in the coming period.

On the other hand, Palestinian cadres in Lebanon, estimated in the thousands, are getting ready to enter the Palestinian territories after the PA managed to obtain the Israeli authorities' consent for their arrival.

Hamas Representative on Sentencing of 'Abd-al-Rahman

NC1801205796 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Arabic 1730 GMT 18 Jan 96

[Telephone interview with Abu-Muhammad Mustafa, representative of the Islamic Resistance Movement in Syria, in Damascus by correspondent Jihad al-'Idan, in Tehran on 18 January; from the "News and Reports" program—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [al-'Idan] Mr. Abu-Muhammad Mustafa, the Islamic Resistance Movement [Hamas] has denounced the action against Shaykh 'Umar 'Abd-al-Rahman in the United States and called for his release. What do you know about the Hamas statement? Is it also meant to remind people of the case of Dr. Musa Abu-Marzuq?

[Mustafa] The statement shows Hamas' position on the unjust sentence issued Shaykh 'Abd-al-Rahman by racist courts dominated by Zionist ideology and the Zionist lobby and by the racist Judge (Kevin Day) who has a big grudge against Islam and the Muslims. This judge was entrusted with Shaykh 'Umar 'Abd-al-Rahman's case and is now in charge of Dr. Musa Abu-Marzuq's case. The latest unjust, wrongful sentences are not supported by any real evidence but rest on confessions made under torture and the testimonies of some agents like 'Imad Salim and others.

These sentences are invalid and unjust and demonstrate the ugly face of the United States, even though it alleges that it is a country of justice, freedom, and impartial courts. These sentences are a forewarning that the verdict in Dr. Musa Abu-Marzuq's case will be similar to the recent ones to please the Zionist entity and Zionist lobby that dominates the U.S. political decisionmaking process. It is sad that this lobby also controls the sentences passed by U.S. courts, which should be free and independent. This is the real U.S. face.

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[Al-'Idan] We have received a report that an extensive demonstration by women has begun in Hebron to show support for Hamas. What do you think of this news?

[Mustafa] I repeat what I said a short time ago. It is not strange for this city to proclaim support for Islam and Hamas. It is the city of God's friend, a great Muslim city whose pious people have offered hundreds of martyrs during the Palestinian Islamic intifadah and even before that. The martyr Yahya 'Ayyash avenged the deaths of the al-Ibrahimi Mosque martyrs by carrying out great martyrdom operations in 'Afula, Hadera, Dizengoff [in Tel Aviv], and elsewhere. It is not strange for this good city and its good men and women to go out into the streets to proclaim their allegiance to Hamas, the martyr 'Ayyash, and the enduring, pious wife of 'Ayyash, and to tell them that Hebron will remain a struggler, mujahid, Muslim city that resists all schemes to liquidate the Palestinian cause, as it has always been. It will continue to be like this, just like all the other Palestinian cities and villages.

[Al-'Idan] Mr. Mustafa, thank you for this important and useful interview.

[Mustafa] You are welcome. Thank you for your efforts. May God preserve you and give you success as you defend Islam and Islamic causes.

'Arafat Returns to Gaza Strip From Amman Visit

JN1801134996 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1200 GMT 18 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat returned to the Gaza Strip from Amman where he held talks with Jordanian Prime Minister al-Sharif Zayd Bin-Shakir and other Jordanian officials. The talks addressed the special Jordanian-Palestinian ties and developments in the peace process in light of preparations for the 20 January Palestinian presidential and legislative elections.

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Algeria

Algerian FLN Central Committee Elects New Chief

LD1901002696 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 2200 GMT 18 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Mr. Boualem Benhamouda was elected today secretary general of the central committee of the National Liberation Front [FLN] with 89 votes to replace Abdelhamid Mehri, who lost a vote of confidence. Both Boualem Benhamouda and Mouloud Hamrouche applied for the post. The central committee is expected to elect members of the political bureau tomorrow.

Messaoud Boulatiour, who covered the election session, filed the following report:

[Boulatiour] The FLN has a new secretary general. Following a heated debate, the party's central committee elected Boualem Benhamouda, member of the party's political bureau, to replace Abdelhamid Mehri.

Boualem Benhamouda won 89 votes while his competitor, the former prime minister, Mouloud Hamrouche, leader of the reformist line in the party, won 82 votes.

Soon after his election, the new FLN Secretary General Boualem Benhamouda said he did not want that post and that he would lead the party till its next congress. He added that his main task would be to reunite the revolutionary family and fight the attempt to break with the past [as heard], clearly referring to his rival Mouloud Hamrouche, as observers said, who supports the break with the past line inside the party.

Mr. Hamrouche, whose supporters looked sad and disappointed, did not seem to be moved by this defeat and rushed to congratulate the new secretary general. He said in front of the members of the central committee that nobody could doubt the credibility of the party's new secretary general, stressing that Boualem Benhamouda was the new leader of the party and that nobody was challenging him on that, pledging to work by his side so that the FLN becomes a strong party capable of resolving all Algeria's problems. [passage omitted]

Curfew To Be Lifted in Algeria During Ramadan

LD1801125496 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in French 1130 GMT 18 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Citizens are advised that during the month of Ramadan, a month of clemency and piety, the curfew imposed in the provinces of Algiers, Blida, Tipaza, Ain Defla, Chlef, Boumerdes, Bouira, M'sila, Medea, and Djelfa, will be lifted as of the first day of Ramadan.

In order to facilitate the security forces' mission of public law and order, citizens residing or visiting these provinces are requested to be extra careful when they go out at night, and to cooperate with the security forces.

For their safety motorists are invited to drive slowly when approaching the roadblocks erected by the security forces, to drive as slowly as possible, to use sidelights only, and to switch the light on inside their cars.

Citizens are also requested to assist the security forces in their mission as best they can during this period.

The expected date for the start of Ramadan is Saturday 20 January.

Algiers Signs $900 Million Draft Agreement With Spain

LD1801184096 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in French 1130 GMT 18 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A $900 million draft agreement was signed in Djenane El Mithaq [government building in Algiers] this morning by Javier Gomez-Navarro Navarette, Spanish minister for trade and tourism, and Algerian Finance Minister Ahmed Benbitour. This credit is intended to encourage commercial trade between Algeria and Spain. With the details is Finance Minister Benbitour, talking to Samia Azziwad:

[Begin Benbitour recording] This draft agreement amounts to $900 million, and $400 million of that is for ordinary trade, that is short-term trade. There is $400 million for the purchase of capital goods in the medium-term, and a development grant of $100 million on preferential terms. We think that the development of commercial operations is a first stage that will lead on to a second stage, and which will make it possible to develop direct investment from Spain and elsewhere. The Spanish minister expressed all the faith they have in the potential capabilities of the Algerian economy, the future of the Algerian economy, and the future development of relations between Spain and Algeria. [end recording]

Other agreements were signed yesterday. They mainly concern the rescheduling of Algeria's debt to Spain, and in the tourism field the Spanish will take charge of the training of executives in that sector. According to Javier Gomez-Navarro, investment in Algeria is the second stage in Algerian-Spanish cooperation.

[Begin Gomez-Navarro recording, in French] Right now investment is our challenge. I think we must give impetus to Spanish investment in Algeria, and for that we are going to hold a major conference in Spain. The first stage will be to publish a special issue on Algeria of the Spanish Trade Ministry's magazine.

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We will hold a major conference in Barcelona and Madrid, with Algerian and Spanish businessmen, to tell Spanish businessmen about opportunities in Algeria, and to give impetus to Spanish investment in Algeria. [end recording]

This meeting between Algerian and Spanish businessmen will take place in Spain between the end of April and the beginning of May.

Algerian FIS Supporters in Europe Issue Newsletter

MS1901114296 Southall THE ENLIGHTENMENT in English 15 Jan 96

[Newsletter "publicizing the Islamic Struggle in Algeria" published by the Islamic Salvation Front "supporters" in Europe; quotation marks as received — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text]

The Military regime's plan of "blowing up" the opposition from within!

Praise be to Allah,

The military dictatorship in Algeria is entering the second most important part of its general plan to "extract by all means" a popular legitimacy it has been lacking since its violent suppression of the people free choice of January 1992. It has decided to follow the elections of Gen. Zeroual by other local and legislative elections of probably the same type.

Many of the political parties in Algeria particularly amongst those who have rightly decided to boycott the elections of Gen. Zeroual, are in a stage of elaborating/ adopting appropriate strategies which will surely have "entering or not the elections and at what conditions?" as a central point.

The military regime is not interested in the long term solutions to the Algerian problem and has been "playing politics" under these abnormal conditions not to effectively normalise the situation but just to lengthen its stay in power no matter the consequences.

The political style of the military regime new administration is a real... military plan. It is there to answer the question (or mission) of how to eliminate by any cost effective measure the "opposition which opposes".

This crucial phase is indeed a decisive one over which the second aspect of the legitimacy is going to be build. The preliminary of this phase is to decide on the conditions under which these elections are to be held. This will lead to the military regime wanting to impose its "final solution" to the opposition while the opposition which by large is more interested in the long term solutions that will enter Algeria in a modern era irreversibly, has its own views. So this is the real near future political battle and for that and as usually the military regime has its own methods which usually "walk" freely over the law of the land.

The military regime is starting its war against the political opposition using "the implosion method". Each important party is targeted from the inside in order to weaken its position and accept the regime conditions. As for the leaders of those parties who did not want to collaborate, personal attacks and dissentions from within their own party is to be expected soon by either the regime secret police "time bombs" implemented long time ago within or by manipulating some groups within the party. So as far as the FFS [Socialist Forces Front], the FLN [National Liberation Front], Enahda,... this period is a period of "artificial crisis" and how to counter it and avoid "explosions" will surely show the competence of the leaders and the political maturity of their bases.

As for the FIS [Islamic Salvation Front], this kind of war is all it has been subjected to since January 1992 and well before. The "military plan" was clear in its objectives and phases. The ultimate objective is to eradicate this party, its militants and suporters if it can be done by taken from it the legitimacy which has been a legitimate political justification of the armed struggle. Its different phases includes the separation of the leaders from the base and the middle rank militants. The regime was surprised as each "head falls" several others emerge. It also includes provoking some kind of popular rejection using certain armed groups against the Algerian people. The regime was surprised by the Algerian people awareness who instinctively would know who did what and why. The walls in most of the cities streets still have fresh FIS slogans newly written on them. It also includes the attempt of separating the Mujahedeen from the FIS political leadership. The regime is also surprised and alarmed by how evens are turning and how strong the Islamic Salvation Army is becoming particularly when sincere Mujahedeen are "returning to the source" after Allah Has made "their sights as of iron" (wa basaruka alawma hadid) and all the manipulating hands have become more apparent. The regime is going back to the disinformation methods using false communiques such as that sent to REUTER saying that the AIS [Algerian Islamic Solidarity] in western regions has united with the GIA [Armed Islamic Group] of that region which has rejected the "central leadership" of the group. If the AIS is for the unification of all the Mujahedeen under the right banner, the last communiques in the name of the GIA and concerning its endorsement of the assassination of Shaykh Mohamed

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Said and Abderezak Redjem and its declaration of war to the FIS and the AIS has confirmed for those who may not have seen yet that there is no future for what is left of that group. The communiques were not a surprise at all, the FIS has never taking such "sensational news" as political pressure to change its firm stand on its principle vis a vis the military regime. However it has become apparent that the dissolution of such banner (GIA) has become a necessary condition for the future of Islam, Jihad and Islamic Dawaa (call to Allah) in Algeria.

The conclusion is that, given the social and economical conditions of Algeria and their negative forecasting in its most optimistic version, the military regime is indeed more in need of associating the opposition to the fiasco of its own make and that the opposition should bare that in mind, not to be in a hurry and give Algeria a future commensurable with its huge sacrifice!

News of Jihad and Mujahidin
Jihad in Algeria: A fresh and sound take off!

Following the military coup against the free choice of the Algerian people who in their majority have expressed their Islamic choice, the Junta usurper of power has adopted a doctrine of eradication toward the FIS and its supporters by the use of massive arrest, systematic torture and deportation to concentration camps in the Sahara and other place of detention.

The FIS have chosen a peaceful mode of change in a society that has reached a level of social injustice and corruption which necessitates a radical rupture from the past if a realistic hope is to be put back in that country. The peaceful path of change was chosen after an overall consideration of all the intrinsic and extrinsic parameters related to the situation in that country. This strategy was chosen not by people who have embraced the Ghandi's non-violence movement or who preach the religion of "offer the other cheek", but by people such as Dr Abbassi Madani, the FIS president who when the necessity to take arms against the enemies of Islam had come, they did not hesitate as the deep history of the Shaykh in fighting the French occupation in the cultural, political and armed struggle domain, shows.

The eradication process launched by the Junta, has left no doubt about the legitimacy of Jihad which according to sincere Islamic scholars of this Ummah is at least of "takdiry type" (impossed Jihad).

It is under these conditions of surprise and deceptive attack from the military Junta that tens of thousands of FIS militants and supporters have entered the Jihad in all its forms. The barbaric attacks of the regime and its strategy to isolate the leaders of the Islamic movement has led to a more or less anarchic enrolment of these FIS militants and supporters into groups without too much asking about their real religious believes as the imperative of fighting the criminal Junta was the priority. Under these conditions many sincere Mujahidin has end up under banners of religious sects astray from the path of Allah such as the "Takfir" movement and other "murtazika" sects.

These sects which use the principle of "takia" dear to the Shiaa and which consists not only in hiding their true believes but also to show that they are the enemies of those sects which are "callers in the Hellfire's doors". These sects will always tell the naive of the muslim that they are themselves in war against these sects and they are killing a lot of them. It is their only way to avoid the muslims running away from them. In this optic many of them did not show their hatred to the FIS, its shuyukh and the muslim Algerian people until later. However gradually the FIS militant who has unknowingly joint such groups will learn from their devious religious rhetoric that such and such scholar has been wrong in "this and that"... then on "this and that and the other"... than in "all what he said"... then "he has been lying to the muslims"... then "his faith was not sincere"... then "he was in fact an unbeliever"! Then they will go to another scholar and so one but always pretending to follow the path "Ahlu Sunna ul Jamaa" (the path of the people of the Sunnah and consensus). What consensus group is there when all its constitutional elements have been declared unbelievers? The only legislative sources that are left for those who accept their "rhetoric" is the "pseudo-scholars" who have become the "imams of the modern Khawaridj" who have a devious "fikh" (legislation) and are looking for a situation or country to apply it in. Algeria was a dream come true for them, they have spoiled the Jihad, degraded its meaning and pushed back the work of "Daawa" (call to Allah) for several years. Libya is next may Allah protect its Jihad and free the Libyan brothers from the tyranny of the colonel. Is there any sincere group which can deliver to the muslim people of Libya that objective before starting to fight other groups and organisations which are all against the colonel? Jihad in Libya has to learn from the recent experience in Algeria and cut the road to those who have already put one hand in it in order to spoil it and kill it before it even starts to walk!

Going back to Algeria, in those groups, an FIS militant will soon find himself hearing that the FIS chosen path was not the right one and "see what is happening" they may add. Those who have taken the decisions have made mistake...have not follow the right path...have in fact transgressed and need to repand...they are not true followers of "ahl Sunnah ul jamaa"...if they do not repand they will die as unbelievers...they are un-

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believers! So if these sects ever achieve the objective of making an FIS militant believe in their "rhetoric", then it means that he has concretises what the Junta secret police "La SM" (security militaire) has these four years wanted to achieve: that of taking the political cover from the Mujahedeen. In Algeria, a Jihad who rejects the FIS route and its achievement including the proof it has brought to the Ummah that it does represent a majority of the Algerian people, is another "Jihad" which concrete objectives are unclear and purposely left "open" and which has not, is not and will not represent the aspiration of the immense majority of the Mujahidin and their supporters.

The literature of these groups based outside of Algeria have played a major role in spreading mischiefs in the ranks of the Muslims in general and the Mujahidin in particular. In their publications one can find 99.99 per cent of their writings is against the Muslims and the rest against the tyrant. Their critics against the FIS has taken the immense majority of their work! Why? Good question which will be answered one day in details Inshaa Allah! What can be said at this point is that their attacks against the FIS and its leaders particularly the jailed shuyukh have coincide perfectly with the political agenda of the Junta in its plan of "taking the legitimacy from the FIS and wear it for itself"! Each time one hears about some Junta General going to the FIS leaders prison cell, one read about dead treats against the FIS leaders in those publications and about "the war between the Mujahedeen" about to start. This is a clear political pressure against the FIS isolated jailed Shuyukh to make concessions to the Junta in order to "avoid killing between the Mujahidin" as they are made to believe. It is to set the jailed leaders minds to the illusion that the Jihad is weak and is being "eaten up from the inside" and that the Mujahedeen have rejected them, in order to weaken the FIS positions.

The day of the elections (16/11/96) was supposed to be the big day in Algiers precisely, where the world media was concentrated. Hundreds of journalists and reporters were in the Algerian capital not only to report the elections but more importantly to see "in reality" the strength of the Mujahidin in the centre of the country particularly after the threats made by the armed group (GIA). Instead the supporters of Jihad was astonished by the news of the slaughtering of shaykh Mohamed Said and Abderakzak Redjam just two weeks before that expected "big day" (elections). Allah knows that the political awareness of the two men would not have allow them to let this unique historical occasion passes them by without having delivered a clair message to the international community in terms of the Mujahidin capability as well as correcting the tarnished image the world has come to know the mujahedeen by, through the Junta monopoly on the news amongst other things. After the assassination of Shaykh Mohamed Said and Abderazak Redjem, and according to Mujahedeen in the capital, orders were given to postpone all military operations during the elections! Who gave the orders and why is a question that will be answered probably one day!

Last week a communique numbered forty was published in the same way and which represents a declaration of war made by the armed group "GIA" to the Islamic Salvation Army (AIS). For some this was a strong shock that was still in effect even when few days later another communique came which officially put the assassination of Shaykh Mohamed Said and Abderazak Redjam in the account of the actual "leadership" of the Armed Group "GIA". If the scholars and Mujahedeen deserve to be slaugthered, what about the rest of the Muslim people? There are already those who are saying that if an "Islamic state" in Algeria is build with the hands of such people than what kind of state it will be and who is going to live in it!

A small point is to be made to those with sincere intentions and who are supporting Jihad in those publications. The Right is what it should be followed as tomorrow in the "Big Day" each one will come with his own deeds in front of Allah and no affiliation to any group, party or organisation will help. In those publications, Shaykh Mohamed Said was declared a year or so ago as having the position of "As-Seddik" because of the great man humility. Can one have a clear conscience in front of Allah, the Ummah and History to declare the man as a transgressor who deserves slaughtering now that the "GIA" has declared so?

The communique number forty is not a surprise and is most probably related to the last part of the Junta plan: the local and legislative elections under Gen.Zeroual conditions which can only be achieved if his opposition is at its weakest position. After those elections and if all goes according to the "military plan", then "what political cover will be left for the armed struggle?" is a real question in terms of Algerian people support to jihad.

As usual the Junta secret police "La SM" is synchronising its actions with the new developments as the real danger for the Junta is starting to be more apparent: the increasing strength of the Islamic Salvation Army (AIS). Many groups are nullifying the pledge made to the previous GIA leader on the basis of a clear breach of Islamic teaching never mind the absence of a sound military strategy and the popular rejection due to an imposed leadership without consensus. "The AIS has never

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been stronger and its ranks never more united" has the AIS national commander Madani Mezrak declared last week. The notorious "La SM" responded as usually by a campaign of propaganda declaring that some of the AIS leaders are giving themselves up to the Junta.

Few days ago the Junta secret police "La SM" has send a fake communique to REUTER news agency which was "fast" to publish the "false scoop" about the AIS of the Western regions under the commandment of Shaykh Ahmed Benaicha, the fals communique says that the AIS has united with that of the western group of the GIA. The AIS has never been against the unity of sincere Mujahidin but the situation today has reached a level where the dissolution of such a group (GIA) has become a necessary condition for the future of Islam, Jihad and Islamic Dawaa in Algeria. However, one can never neglect those sincere Mujahidin who may still fighting the Junta under that banner and who have not committed crimes against innocent people. One should invite them to join their brothers in their unique combat whose finality is for the Ummah to regain its dignity and for the Mujahedeen individually to gain either of the goodness: victory or Martyrdom. Neither one can neglect the Martyrs of Islam who were killed while fighting under that banner sometimes from the enemy hands and sometime from those "who have joined the Mujahidin with arms and weapons from the Junta barracks" and have reached sincere leaders may Allah accept them as Martyrs.

As for those who since the elections of the 16/11/95 were declared the "first political opposition" of the country acording to the Junta figures and who have chosen to seat with "pharaoh" since the day when war against Islamists was declared in January 92, they should know that the "FIS's sword is still sharp" and as the FIS has let them in peace in what they were playing at with the Junta, it also expects reciprocity from them and never use the FIS name in their electoral campaign. More over they should not use the FIS rejection of the Armed group "GIA" in a propaganda type of "we have told you so" because this rejection is based on something far superior than "oportunist politics", it is a difference between licit and illicite in the Sight of Allah. As for the FIS having supported Jihad in January 92, the FIS will always support it each time the military "Pharaohs" try to play gods on earth and if things are to be repeated, the FIS will always stick to its principles and let others stick to their little "fishy" chair in Pharaoh's diner table.

Following is a recent communique from the western commander of the AIS as a direct answer to the false communique sent by the Junta secret police to REUTER.

The Islamic Salvation Front The Islamic Salvation Army
8th of January 1996
Communique

Allah Says: "Truly Allah Loves those who fight in His Cause in battle array, as if they were a solid cemented structure." [Koran surat As-Saff, 61:4, translation Yusuf Ali].

And the prophet peace be upon him said: "A believer is for a believer elements of a structure which sustain each other (and he (p.b.u.h) crossed his fingers to illustrate the meaning.)" Hadith agreed upon it.

The Junta methods of deception to weaken the Jihad in Algeria and its attempt to liquidating it are all heading to failure in front of the muslim Algerian people resistance, their legitimate leadership and their sons the Mujahidin. For that, the Islamic Salvation Army (AIS) invites all those who are standing with this divine march with their weapons, wealth, pens, and their hearts and who are calling for an Islamic government and convinced by the FIS path, the path of the "people of the Sunnah and consensus" (Ahl As-Sunnah wa al jamaa) as understood by the predecessors of this Ummah (salaf Assalah), under its (FIS) legitimate leadership at the head of which are the Shuyukh Abbassi Madani and his deputy Ali Belhadj, to surpass all obstacles and deterrents and legislative search (ijtihadate) that do not give any strong and decisive blows to this junta which presence in the field is about to disappear, and to join the Islamic Salvation Army and to leave all other organisations of jihad which the reality has proven their enmity toward the muslim Algerian people and their transgression to the islamic teachings during their "jihadic" march. As we see in the Islamic Salvation Army, the legitimate son of the Islamic Salvation Front, the largest framework with most "compassionate heart" in unifying these energies and strengthening with them Allah's religion. Allah Says: "Allah Has promised, to those among you who believe and work righteous deeds, that He will, of surety grant them in the land inheritance as He granted it to those before them, that He will establish in authority their religion the one which He has chosen for them and that he will change (their state), after the fear in which they (lived), to one of security and peace...[Surat An-Nur, 24:55, Translation Yusuf Ali].

The commander of wester regions: Shaykh Ahmed Benaicha.

Help the sisters in the holy month of Ramadan!

"The Enlightenment" is happy to offer this space for the "Muslim Women's Prisoner Support Group" a registered

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charity organisation. please do help may Allah reward you!

Advertisement

Dear Brothers & Sisters in Islam, As- salaamu Alaikum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatu All praise is due to Allah (s.w.t). Peace and Blessings be upon the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.s), his family, his companions and all those who follow in his footsteps. Ameen. The Muslim women's Prisoner support Group is a recognised charitable organisation for the benefit of Muslim Sisters held in British Prisons, many of which are political Refugees, Asylum Seekers, Deportees, who speak little or no English. This break down in communication has meant that their cases are often unfairly represented, unfairly tried and subsequently they are unfairly sentenced. We appeal to the Muslim Umma, to remember these Sisters and their families in this Blessed month of ramadan. Let us show mercy and compassion to our sisters, that we may continue to receive mercy. The M.W.P.S.G. is in serious need of your Zakat/sadaqa to continue this much needed work (Fisa-bi- lillah). Anything you can contribute will be greatly appreciated. "The Believers, men and woman, are protectors one of another: they enjoin what is just, and forbid what is evil: they observe regular prayers, pay zakat and obey Allah and His Messenger. On them Allah pour His mercy: For Allah is exalted in power, Wise."(sura 9:71) Please make Zakat/ Saddaqa payable to the following: Lloyds Bank Muslim Women's Prisoner Support Group Ac/No. 03412602 Sort Code:30- 96-88 Charity No. 1047844

Help needed from the Algerian community overseas!

An Algerian national by the name of Nemour Masoud was find dead recently under suspicious circumstances in Brighton, England. Mr Nemour who was sixty five years old has no known relatives apparently. If anybody knows anything about the family or relatives of Mr Nemour in Algeria or somewhere else please contact the Enlightenment,P.O. Box 198, Southall, Middx, UB1 3PR. Needless to say that the Algerian diplomatic representation was not interested in moving the smallest finger in order to help locate Mr Nemour's family. Let this announcement be for the sake of Allah otherwise a long article may follow under such title as "the military regime and the Algerian community overseas: between the propaganda and the diplomatic missions neglect of duty!"

Egypt

Libya's al-Qadhdhafi Visits, Holds Talks With Mubarak

Mubarak Hosts Banquet for al-Qadhdhafi

NC1801135496 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1300 GMT 18 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Sidi Barrani, 18 Jan (MENA)—President Husni Mubarak has hosted a banquet in honor of Libyan revolution leader Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi, who arrived in the Egyptian town of Sidi Barrani at noon today. The two leaders resumed their talks over dinner. Also attending the banquet were members of the Egyptian and Libyan delegations.

Egypt's al-Sharif on al-Qadhdhafi's Visit, Talks With Mubarak

NC1801143296 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1250 GMT 18 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Sidi Barrani, 18 Jan (MENA)—Minister of Information Safwat al-Sharif has said that Libyan revolution leader Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi's visit to Egypt is in line with strong and close bilateral ties.

He added that today's meeting between President Husni Mubarak and Colonel al-Qadhdhafi follows a stage fraught with political change in the area in light of the progress made in the peace process on the Palestinian and Jordanian tracks and events on the Syrian track. The visit, he continued, also follows President Husni Mubarak's numerous visits and meetings, especially his visit to France and his meeting with U.S. Vice President Al Gore. The visit also coincides with important economic changes in the region. Thus the meeting provides an opportunity to exchange views on world and regional issues and the Middle East issue, he said.

Noting the importance of the meeting between the two leaders, Mubarak and al-Qadhdhafi, the information minister said it comes in light of many changes in the Arab arena. The meeting, he added, is an opportunity to exchange views on Arab issues, on joint action to unify the Arab fold, and on a common outlook toward political, economic, and technical bilateral cooperation. He noted that the Joint Egyptian-Libyan Higher Committee is scheduled to convene soon to assess performance, cooperation, and coordination in every sphere.

Al-Sharif said that while the Egyptian-Libyan summit was in session, Egyptian ministers and members of the delegation accompanying Colonel al-Qadhdhafi held consultations.

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Al-Qadhdhafi's delegation includes the foreign minister and senior officials concerned with the joint electricity grid, economic cooperation, and foreign issues. The two foreign ministers held talks to discuss several issues of interest to both countries.

The information minister said the Egyptian and Libyan delegations evaluated joint investment projects.

The information minister, who accompanied Colonel al-Qadhdhafi on the 80-km trip from the al-Sallum entry point to Sidi Barrani, described the Egyptian welcome extended to Colonel al-Qadhdhafi as magnificent. It embodied the Egyptian people's feelings of love and faithfulness to Arab leaders, he added.

Al-Sharif said that many people in the areas near the land route between al-Sallum and Sidi Barrani came out to greet al-Qadhdhafi, who greeted them.

Mubarak, al-Qadhdhafi Hold News Conference

NC1801155496 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1500 GMT 18 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Sidi Barrani, 18 jan (MENA)—President Husni Mubarak has welcomed Libyan Revolution leader Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi. He said: We often meet, though perhaps this time we have not met for a rather long time because of numerous circumstances. However, contacts have continued by telephone and other messages.

At a news conference after his three-hour talk with Col. al-Qadhdhafi, Mubarak said: We discussed the situation in the Arab World, Arab issues, and Arab cooperation. These are the basic issues we discussed, but time was too tight to go into detail on all these topics. He was responding to a question by MENA on whether today's meeting between the two leaders, which came after a long period during which they did not meet, dealt with future joint actions.

Asked his view of how to clear the air in Arab relations in view of the current developments in the Arab World, Col. al-Qadhdhafi noted that "it is difficult to do this in the current atmosphere" because there are numerous moves that harm Arab solidarity, such as the call to partition Iraq. He called on the Arab countries to be vigilant against the challenges threatening the Arab nation.

On Libya's undertakings with Sudan, in view of their good relations, to confront terrorism emanating from that country, Col. al-Qadhdhafi said that there are groups in Sudan that "do not recognize the Khartoum regime." He said that this wave of terrorism may "bring down al-Bashir and al-Turabi," on the grounds that they are false gods. He noted that Libya's relations with Sudan are normal and they are trying to use these relations to heal the rift between Sudan and Egypt and to help Sudan itself, because he believes that Sudan is pursuing a counterproductive policy.

On the future of the Egyptian workers in Libya, Col. al-Qadhdhafi said: "We do not have Egyptian workers but Arab workers. All Libyans and Arabs work and reside in Libya, and there is no problem."

President Mubarak stressed that there are no problems regarding the Egyptian workers in Libya.

Responding to a question on expectations of increasing Libyan investments in Egypt in the future, Col. al-Qadhdhafi said: I concede that Egypt has created a good climate for investment of funds, and this is reassuring. Libya has very considerable resources in this field. He expressed his belief that Libyan investments must go to Egypt first and foremost.

The talks between President Mubarak and Col. al-Qadhdhafi lasted three hours. It is to be recalled that President Mubarak and Col. al-Qadhdhafi were eager to meet in the Sidi Barrani area today despite the bad weather that prevailed in the Matruh Governorate today and yesterday, with cold, high winds, and heavy rain. Both leaders were eager to hold this meeting in view of the recent Arab and international developments and the important issues they want to discuss at the bilateral level.

Al-Qadhdhafi Leaves Egypt for Home

NC1801151096 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1438 GMT 18 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Sidi Barrani, 18 jan (MENA)—Libyan revolution leader Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi left the Ra's Barrani area this afternoon for home. President Mubarak saw him off. The two leaders embraced warmly and then Col. al-Qadhdhafi got into a vehicle and drove toward the al-Sallum border point. Col. al-Qadhdhafi earlier today held talks with President Mubarak on a number of international, regional, Arab, and bilateral issues of common concern. Col. al-Qadhdhafi also held a news conference before leaving Sidi Barrani after a visit of several hours.

International Committee Urges Peaceful Solution to Lockerbie Issue

NC1801141496 Cairo MENA in English
1351 GMT 18 Jan 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, 18 Jan (MENA)—The International Follow-up Committee on Lockerbie crisis today called upon the UN Security Council to urge all parties to the Libya-West crisis to bring their dispute

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before the International Court of Justice to resolve all matters peacefully.

The committee, that ended its four days of meetings here today, asked the U.S. and Britain to try all peaceful ways to settle the Lockerbie crisis in line with the UN.

Paper Views Expectations of Egyptian-U.S. Partnership

NC1901080896 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0605 GMT 19 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 19 Jan (MENA)—AL-AHRAM Chief Editor Ibrahim Nafi', in his weekly article today, sets out the bases and requirements that should be considered in connection with the Egyptian-U.S. partnership, to ensure that it succeeds and benefits both parties.

The writer praises the great change in Egyptian-U.S. economic relations, a change that finds the relationship based on mutual economic interests. Currently the United States extends conditional aid to Egypt, which stimulates the U.S. economy and at the same time gives the United States a huge surplus in its trade with Egypt. The writer stresses that Egypt must be aware of what it can give to the United States under this gradual change, which will come to fruition over the next few months and years. Egypt should know what it wants in return from the United States within the context of a real economic partnership that could help support the Egyptian economic breakthrough as it enters the 21st century. The article notes the Egyptian market's importance, saying imports from the United States will increase once this market is opened to U.S. goods as part of any partnership that includes liberalizing bilateral trade.

Ibrahim Nafi' lists gains the United States could reap if it invests in Egypt due to Egypt's unique geographical position and the availability of Egyptian manpower far cheaper than in the United States or any other country, such as Israel. He adds that another factor is Egypt's strength and stability with a climate conducive to investment, which is developing quickly. The main features of this climate, he writes, are the free rein given to the private sector, the privatization of part of the public sector, the increasing liberalization of foreign trade, the reduction in Egypt's rate of inflation, the successive reductions in bureaucratic procedures and measures, and the tax advantages to foreign investors.

The writer goes on to say that what Egypt wants from the United States is fair trade. Saying that it is not reasonable to let Egypt's trade deficit with the United States remain, he notes that this deficit reached around $8.639 million between 1987 and 1993. He added: It is not reasonable to retain quantitative barriers to Egyptian exports to the U.S. market. The United States should open its markets to these exports until an agreement is reached to liberalize bilateral trade while taking into account that such an agreement should recognize the importance of protecting and compensating emerging Egyptian industries that might initially be damaged by this liberalization until they can restructure themselves.

Ibrahim Nafi' says Egypt also wants the U.S. Administration to guarantee U.S. investments in Egypt and to encourage U.S. companies to invest in Egypt and thus help the direct and unrestricted transfer of modern technology, since the two countries have a strategic partnership for peace and stability in the Middle East.

He says: With these relations, Egypt can gradually dispense with U.S. aid. It can also become an economic partner of great benefit to the United States within a few years. He adds: Egypt, which needs technology, foreign investment, and open markets for its exports in return for all the advantages it could give its partners, will choose its strategic option and turn to the party that will work best with it on the basis of mutual interests.

The writer asserts that the conditions exist for the success of the Egyptian-U.S. partnership. He says: This partnership is not one of mere economic and technical agreements, but has a political dimension represented by political determination to develop bilateral relations along the lines explained by President Husni Mubarak and U.S. Vice President Al Gore at their recent news conference in Cairo, especially with regard to Egypt's regional economic role.

The writer notes that the United States has a concept of a new Middle East based on arrangements to address current circumstances through economic summits and bilateral partnership agreements to create a greater alliance of citizens who reject extremism and who are ready to take small risks for peace and progress.

Egyptian Foreign Minister on Interest in Palestinian Elections

NC1901102296 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0940 GMT 19 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 19 Jan (MENA)—Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa has stated that Egypt is very interested in the Palestinian general elections, which start tomorrow on Palestinian soil for the first time.

In a press statement today, Musa said Egypt believes this major and important step on the Palestinian track will lead to a new stage in the Palestinian march toward a Palestinian state.

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Musa explained that for the first time the Palestinian people will elect their government, legislative council, and judiciary bodies. These elections will establish a regional and territorial framework for exercising power. All these steps will lead to the start of the final phase negotiations in May. These negotiations will tackle key problems, which must be resolved, including the right to self-determination ahead of the establishment of a Palestinian state.

Musa expressed the hope that the elections will be held in an atmosphere that will allow the Palestinian people to consider 20 January a historic day in their march and the Israeli people to consider it a real step toward having a neighboring entity, namely, Palestine. Real and comprehensive peace will then follow in the region.

Egyptian Complaint Against Sudan on Extradition Failure Viewed

NC1801154196 Paris AFP in English
1450 GMT 18 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, Jan 18 (AFP)—Egypt plans to explain to the United States its complaint filed against Sudan at the UN Security Council during U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Madeline Albright's visit here, an official said Thursday [18 January].

Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa will discuss the matter with Albright on Monday during her two-day visit here, said Sayyid Kassil al-Masri, the minister's deputy for international relations.

Security Council members voted unanimously Tuesday to condemn Sudan for not extraditing three suspects linked to a plot to kill Egyptian President Husni Mubarak.

After the end of closed-door sessions by the 15-member council, this month's council president, John Weston of Britain, said some members envisioned further action including a resolution against Sudan.

Diplomats reported that Botswana was leading the non-aligned nations in a discussion of a text. Weston himself met with Sudanese Foreign Affairs Minister 'Ali 'Uthman Muhammad Taha to complain about armed incursions into Ethiopia.

Ethiopia, which sought an emergency meeting of the council, is seeking the extradition of three people allegedly linked to an Islamic terrorist group that tried to kill Mubarak last June when he landed in Ethiopia for a summit of the Organization for African Unity.

Egyptian Prime Minister Discusses Priorities, Economy, Investment

NC1901051896 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1420 GMT 18 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 18 Jan (MENA)—Prime Minister Dr. Kamal al-Janzuri has asserted that the government will not impose any new burdens on the citizens. He said that the government is conducting a comprehensive survey of all problems in order to solve them and meet the citizens' aspirations. He emphasized that the government intends to ease the citizens' burdens year after year.

At his meeting with newspaper chief editors in his office today, Dr. al-Janzuri said citizens who have endured hardships for many years want to see progress being made. He added that citizens are able to sense progress without the necessity of statements or news conferences. He noted citizens can sense even slight progress. It is satisfying to see that the citizens feel that things have actually improved recently and that this is not just talk.

Al-Janzuri said that the government operates according to collective responsibility "with a team spirit" to promote development and boost production in all industry, agriculture, tourism, and other spheres. He added our aim is to support the Egyptian economy to enable it to raise the standards of education, health, and the utilities.

The prime minister said that Egypt should rank ahead of the developing nations, given its material and human resources. These resources will guarantee Egypt's advancement so that it can take its appropriate place despite the European and Asian blocs' quarrels over who should be in the lead. He emphasized that Egypt's capabilities are no less than those of Asian countries that rank above us, such as India, Malaysia, and Indonesia.

Dr. al-Janzuri said: Peace will be realized in our region within months. We must hurry to take a leading regional position with a strong and rich economy based on high output and quality products. He added: We must race against time and this requires high performance and achievements, and maintaining quality through discipline and decisiveness. There are four million people employed by the government and two million in the public sector. Yet performance is not as it should be. We must be decisive in punishing slackers and rewarding the deserving.

Dr. al-Janzuri noted the importance of the press and of the right to criticize so that the executive branch can learn the truth. He said emphasis should be on positive aspects with a view to encouraging progress. He added that the average Egyptian citizen characteristically opposes wrongdoing. He emphasized that decisions should

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be in harmony with Egyptian public sentiment and made after consultation between the executive branch and all other State agencies, including political parties and the press, in addition to the People's Assembly and the Consultative Council.

Dr. al-Janzuri emphasized his concern that the government not act unilaterally without consulting with the parties concerned and without listening to the views of all forces in Egypt during the new transitional period.

The prime minister emphasized the sanctity and concern for public funds and the need for people to enjoy their rights, "because rewarding those who do not deserve it is a misuse of public money." He noted that ministers are banned from publishing obituaries in newspapers and stated that publication should be at their own expense.

Dr. al-Janzuri noted the need to set aside revenue for production requirements. Last year's revenues, he remarked, totaled 11 billion pounds, while the consumer goods were worth 4 billion pounds.

The prime minister stressed the need to encourage both foreign and domestic investment in Egypt, to broaden the production and services base, and provide more jobs. He noted that Egypt's share of last year's investment reached $ 400 million while in Asian countries like Indonesia got $ 4 billion. This, he explained, shows that Egypt has to work hard to catch up with the world's hectic economic race.

He reiterated that the government will not submit to the People's Assembly any legislation increasing the people's burdens, in contrast to past practice.

Concluding his remarks, Dr. al-Janzuri said the government will see to it that economic and social actions are in line with political thinking, because politics should keep pace with economics.

Libya

Al-Qadhdhafi in Egypt for Meeting With Mubarak

LD1801115196 Tripoli JANA in English 1450 GMT 18 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sidi Barrani A'ina al-Nar (January) 18 (JAMAHIRIYAH NEWS AGENCY) — The leader of the revolution has arrived in Sidi Barrani today for a visit to Egypt, where President Husni Mubarak were at the forefront of those receiving the leader.

After the arrival of the leader of the revolution in Sidi Barrani a meeting was held between the leader of the revolution and President Husni Mubarak, handling Arab and international issues of joint concern.

Increase in Iraqi Contract Workers in Libya Viewed

MM1801120296 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 18 Jan 96 pp 1, 4

[Unattributed report: "Libya Flooded With Iraqi Workers]

[FBIS Translated Text] Tunis, Rabat, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT — Diplomatic sources in Tunis have told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT that there has been an increase in the number of Iraqi workers arriving in Libya via Tunisia or Egypt. For their part, Libyan sources have told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT that employing Iraqis does not mean dispensing with [other] Arab workers.

According to the diplomatic sources in Tunis, there are about 16,000 Iraqi workers in Libya, and that these cover various areas of specialization, in addition to university professors and medical cadres.

The sources pointed out that a number of factors have caused Iraqi workers to go to Libya, first and foremost the fact that Iraqi workers are cheaper to employ in place of the workers whose contracts were terminated by Libya recently.

The second factor is the Iraqi workers' need for job opportunities in any country because of the difficult conditions Iraq is experiencing.

Third, Libyan sources are reassured that Iraqi workers will not get involved in any activities that are fundamentalist or political in nature.

Fourth, most of the Iraqi workers arriving in Libya are old — which indicates that their only aim is to look for a livelihood in order to improve the living standards of their families in Iraq.

Fifth, the Libyan people's satisfaction with Iraqi workers, since both share a common denominator, namely the blockade imposed on the two countries.

However, Libyan sources have denied to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT any intention on Tripoli's part of dispensing with Arab workers completely or replacing them with Iraqi workers. The sources said that contracts for Iraqi teachers (3,000) do not mean an end to contracts for Arab capabilities.

The same sources, however, stressed that Libya will continue to contract Iraqis from other areas of specialization such as doctors, engineers, and others.

Asked whether this step is tantamount to indirect solidarity [with Iraq] against the embargo imposed on it under the Security Council resolutions, the sources said that Tripoli has on many occasions declared its

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solidarity with Iraq, which is being subjected to a state of hostility from Western states as is the case with Libya.

Morocco

IMF Director General Praises Morocco's Economic Policy

LD1801220496 Rabat RTM Television Network in Arabic 2030 GMT 18 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] IMF Director General Michel Camdessus today hailed Morocco's economic policy in a statement he made to the press before leaving our country.

Mr. Camdessus said that Morocco was facing three major challenges at the end of the 20th century. The first challenge is to achieve financial stability, reduce the debt, and open up to the world economy. This challenge, he added, was taken up at the start of the 1990's when we noticed that Morocco was emerging among the rising powers [as heard]. If we look at the next century, he said, we will see that one of the goals of His Majesty King Hassan II is Mediterranean-European cooperation and Morocco's integration into that environment. This vision, he added, is being achieved.

Camdessus further said that the Barcelona Conference had now defined the stages of this development in a free-trade zone. Therefore, he added, it is necessary to act quickly in the set direction; in other words, open up to the outside world, strengthen financial rules, develop the system of social solidarity, and create an environment suitable for business. I know full well, he said, that by drawing up a medium-term economic policy, the Moroccan Government is aware of the importance of the European-Mediterranean environment.

The other challenge, he added, which is not new for Morocco, is the result of three hard years caused by the drought and which had a negative impact on the development gains made previously. Luckily, he further said, this year promises to be a good one and will help restore the balances. Therefore, he said, these are the challenges facing the government. I believe, he said, that the government will be able to reduce the budget deficit. I discussed all this, he said, with His Majesty King Hassan II and with the ministers, and I renewed to them my faith in the actions undertaken by Morocco, which will manage to build a solid economy that will create more job opportunities. I am certain, he concluded, that Morocco will be on the list of the rising powers.

Michel Camdessus was seen off by Mr. Mohamed Kabbaj, minister of finance and foreign investments.

World Bank Official in Morocco To Bolster Relations

LD1801221196 Rabat RTM Television Network in Arabic 2030 GMT 18 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Mr. Kamal Darwish, deputy director of the World Bank, held several meetings in Rabat today mainly to discuss ways to bolster Morocco's relations with this international financial institution. Mr. Darwish's talks with Mr Andre Azoula, his majesty's adviser for economic and financial affairs, covered the relations between Morocco and the World Bank. On this occasion, the two sides reviewed the various aspects of bilateral cooperation, particularly in the economic and social sectors, which are supported by the World Bank.

Mr. Darwish held a similar meeting with Mr. Mohamed Hama, the minister delegate to the prime minister in charge of revitalizing the economy. The talks focused on the state of the Moroccan economy and its future prospects. In this respect, the minister highlighted the main trends of the economic strategy that Morocco will follow from now until the year 2000 with a view to reviving economic and social sectors, providing job opportunities, and achieving local development, starting with the region since it is at the heart of development.

Moroccan Minister Notes Successful Privatization Bonds Subscription

LD1801225296 Rabat RTM Television Network in Arabic 2030 GMT 18 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Three days after the end of the operation to sell privatization bonds, a news conference was held in Casablanca today to give a general assessment of the result of this operation aimed at encouraging savings and revitalizing the stock market.

The subscription for privatization bonds registered 31,770 buyers, between individuals and body corporates. Moroccans living abroad contributed with 22 percent to the privatization operation [as heard]. This is what Mr. Abderrahmane Saidi, minister for privatization delegate to the prime minister in charge of state installations, said in a press statement in which he assessed the results and the prospects.

[Begin Saidi recording] The results are clear. This financial product has been well received by the public and to be honest its success has exceeded our expectations because we offered bonds worth in total 1.5 billion dirhams for sale, and the demand reached 1.96 billion dirhams. The operation was successful since over 31,000 Moroccans took part in it. Our objective was

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the participation of Moroccans, the largest number possible of Moroccans in the privatization process through subscription [for bonds]. Consequently, we had 31,770 subscribers and this figure making us happy and is encouraging. [end recording]

The news conference was also an opportunity to analyze the difficulties, which were overcome thanks to the joint action with the financial institutions that sold the bonds. At the end of his report, the minister said that the next operation in the privatization process would concern Samir [state-owned refinery]. The owners of privatization bonds can turn these bonds into shares.

Sudan

Sudanese Opposition Announces Plans To Intensify Activities

EA1701133796 Asmara Voice of the Broad Masses of Eritrea in Tigrinya 0400 GMT 17 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Sudanese National Democratic Alliance [SNDA] meeting, which was held from 12 to 15 January, ended on 16 January after issuing important resolutions and recommendations.

According to the final communique, the participants listened to and discussed various reports on the activities of the alliance [SNDA]. They also discussed internal and external issues and their significance in exacerbating the crisis of the Khartoum regime. They also discussed the September 1995 students uprising, the victories scored by the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement [SPLM] in October 1995. The communique went on to say that the alliance had been forced by the Khartoum regime to pursue war as an alternative and to assume the responsibility of carrying it out. The participants discussed the draft constitution of the transitional period and passed important recommendations and resolutions.

To mention a few: To exert relentless efforts to topple the Khartoum regime; to extend more support to the Sudanese People's Liberation Army and Movement [SPLA/M] in order to preserve its initiatives and score more victories; and to reject the so-called elections declared by the Khartoum regime.

In order to coordinate its [word indistinct] with the struggle of the SPLA and intensify its military operations, the SNDA has formed high-level political and military committees and come out with a strategic program. The SNDA leadership said the unity of Sudan should be based on the aspiration, justice and equality of the people and unanimously agreed on this principle. It reaffirmed its strong support for last year's June 1995 resolution on self-determination. It hailed the Sudanese people's struggle and determination and praised the September uprising by the people of Sudan, condemned the barbaric actions by the government against students, thanked the Eritrean People's Front for Democracy and Justice and president Isaias Afwerki for their firm support to the people of Sudan and their struggle for regional democracy, stability, peace and prosperity. The participants hailed the initiatives taken by Ethiopia and Egypt to resolve the conflict between Eritrea and Yemen peacefully and through dialogue and international laws.

Sudan's al-Bashir Interviewed on Rebels, Cited on War in South

EA1801182696 Omdurman National Unity Radio in Arabic 1730 GMT 17 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Staff Lieutenant General 'Umar al-Bashir, president of the Republic, has praised the solid relations between Sudan and Indonesia. He also praised the developing economic and commercial ties as well as the two countries' common political stance toward a number of regional international issues. He made the remarks during an interview conducted by Mrs. Zahra (Andi), a correspondent of the Indonesian NEW VOICE newspaper in his office at the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers today [17 January].

Lt. Gen. al-Bashir denied accusations that Sudan supports terrorism. He stressed that these accusations — promoted by circles hostile to Sudan — were baseless. He referred to the failure of those promoting these accusations to produce any evidence incriminating Sudan in this regard.

On democracy in Sudan, his excellency stressed that the [popular] congresses system being implemented currently was more democratic and more suited to Sudan's condition especially after the failure of the multiparty experiment in the years preceding the National Salvation Revolution [passage omitted]

His excellency also stressed that from a military point of view, the rebel movement has been defeated completely following the successive defeats it suffered at the hands of the Armed Forces, despite direct foreign support for the rebel forces and the recent Ugandan intervention. He said despite the military defeat of the rebels, Sudan did not believe the military option as a way of resolving the southern problem and it had adopted dialogue with the rebel movement since the inception of the revolution. [passage omitted]

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Bahrain

Amman Radio Reports on Manama Meridien Hotel Explosion

JN1801155696 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1500 GMT 18 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Bahraini Interior Ministry today announced that a locally-made bomb exploded at the Meridien Hotel, where an international oil conference is taking place. In its statement, the ministry said that the bomb, which was planted in one of the hotel's bathrooms yesterday did not cause any casualties, only material damage.

Bahraini Opposition Leader Condemns Meridien Hotel Blast

JN1801160796 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1700 GMT 18 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Yesterday, an explosion occurred at the Meridien Hotel in Manama, where an international oil conference is taking place. Reports said that the explosion resulted in material damage only. In light of this new development, our correspondent Ahmad Birru, asked Mansur al-Jamri, representative of the Bahrain Freemen Movement [harakat ahrar al-bahrayn], about the situation:

[Begin recording] [al-Jamri] First, we must note that the Bahraini opposition has always condemned violence. However, the security forces escalated the situation and drew the reaction of people who were attacked in their mosques, and insulted. The security forces arrested symbols who are respected by the people. 'Abd-al-Wahhab Husayn was arrested last Sunday [14 January]. At 1600 today, Thursday, Shaykh 'Abd-al-Amir al-Jamri was arrested after they surrounded his home. He was also interrogated two days ago in continuation of the interrogation which began this week.

We believe that the spread of violence is caused by the security forces, which are playing with fire and which have always miscalculated in their dealings with the people. They have closed all doors to dialogue and peaceful action and besieged all. This resulted in a reaction which should not be ignored.

The opposition has not decided to escalate the situation; it is still adhering to peaceful action. However, if the government decides to escalate violence we cannot control matters. We condemn violence from all parties and call on the government to encourage peaceful methods.

[Birru] Has the dialogue between the government and opposition come to an end?

[Al-Jamri] This is correct. The government has closed all doors to dialogue. It does not want to talk with any faction. It wants to divide the arena and isolate a certain group or individual to strike at the opposition. [end recording]

Iranian Minister Visits Bahrain for Oil, Gas Conference

LD1801211996 Tehran IRNA in English 2108 GMT 18 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Abu Dhabi, Jan. 18, IRNA — Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Maleki told Bahrain's Foreign Affairs Minister Muhammad Bin-Mubarak al-Khalifah in Bahrain Thursday [18 January] that Iran was interestd to broaden ties with Persian Gulf states and that Iranian industrial companies and consultant engineers looked forward to getting involved in Bahrain's development projects.

The Iranian Foreign Ministry official who is in Bahrain for international Mideast oil and gas conference told al-Khalifah that Iran wanted very much to perpetuate collaboration with neighboring Muslim states as an aid to regional peace and security.

The foreign minister of Bahrain said in response that his government looked forward to maintaining brotherly relations with Iran in the area of diplomacy, economy and culture and subscribed to the principle of good neighborly relations with Islamic Iran.

He expressed hope that Iranian scholars would participate in seminars and conferences in Bahrain at which to offer the results of their own scholarship in various areas.

The visiting deputy foreign minister of Iran and the foreign minister also agreed that perpetual talks on the issues of the region would be the best method for promoting mutual understanding between Iran and Bahrain.

Kuwait

Kuwaiti Heir Apparent Receives Iranian Foreign Minister

LD1601124696 Kuwait Radio Kuwait in Arabic 1000 GMT 16 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] His highness the heir apparent and prime minister, Shaykh Sa'd al-'Abdallah al-Salim al-Sabah, in his office at Bayan Palace at 1000 received the foreign minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Dr. 'Ali Akbar Velayati, and the accompanying delegation on the occasion of his visit to the country. [passage omitted]

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Syrian Deputy Prime Minister Meets Kuwaiti Amir, Officials

JN1801085496 Damascus Syrian Arab Television Network in Arabic 1830 GMT 17 Jan 96

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Kuwaiti Amir Shaykh Jabir al-Ahmad al-Sabah today received Dr. Salim Yasin, deputy prime minister for economic affairs. The meeting was attended by Dr. Muhammad al-'Imadi, minister of economy and foreign trade; Dr. Muhammad Khalid al-Mahayini, minister of finance; Dr. 'Abd-al-Rahim al-Subay'i, minister of state for planning affairs; and Dr. Mustafa al-Hajj 'Ali, Syria's ambassador to Kuwait. The meeting was also attended by Nasir al-Rawdan, Kuwaiti second deputy prime minister and minister of finance.

Dr. Yasin conveyed President Hafiz al-Asad's greetings and best wishes to his highness the amir, who, in turn, asked Dr. Yasin to convey his warm wishes and greetings to his excellency the president. Shaykh Jabir al-Ahmad al-Sabah reiterated Kuwait's support of Syria's position on the peace process. The two sides also discussed the brotherly Syrian-Kuwaiti relations and the means to further foster and develop them.

Dr. Salim Yasin had earlier met with Shaykh Sa'd al-'Abdallah al-Sabah, Kuwaiti heir apparent and prime minister. The meeting was attended by the accompanying ministerial delegation and the Syrian ambassador to Kuwait. Dr. Yasin conveyed to His Highness Shaykh Sa'd al-'Abdallah the greetings of Prime Minister Mahmud al-Zu'bi. The Kuwaiti heir apparent expressed his country's appreciation for Syria's stances and efforts under the leadership of President Hafiz al-Asad in serving the Arab nation's causes. He also voiced Kuwait's readiness to contribute to the implementation of development projects in Syria and praised the level of relations between the two sisterly states.

Dr. Yasin, deputy prime minister for economic affairs, also met with Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad, first deputy prime minister and foreign minister, and discussed with him bilateral relations and issues of mutual concern. Present at the meeting were members of the accompanying delegation and the Syrian ambassador in Kuwait.

The Syrian-Kuwaiti Joint Ministerial Committee today began its fourth round of meetings under the chairmanship of Dr. Salim Yasin, Syrian deputy prime minister for economic affairs, and Nasir al-Rawdan, Kuwaiti second deputy prime minister and finance minister. [passage omitted]

Kuwaiti Official Meets Russian Foreign Minister in Moscow

LD1801144496 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 1405 GMT 18 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Moscow, 18 Jan (KUNA) — Sulayman Majid al-Shahin, undersecretary at the Kuwaiti Foreign Ministry, today met with Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov in the first meeting between an Arab official and the Russian minister. In a joint statement made to KUNA and to Kuwaiti TV, Al-Shahin said that his meeting with Primakov, during which he conveyed a letter from Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jabir al-Sabah, Kuwait's deputy prime minister and foreign minister, and his expanded meeting with Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Viktor Posuvalyuk are seen as another proof of the depth of bilateral relations between the two countries. He added that the letter contained [an outline of] Kuwait's stands on the issues which the State of Kuwait wishes to raise with its friends in the Russian Federation.

He said that despite the critical circumstances through which Russia is passing, there is an opportunity for raising all issues of common interest. He pointed out that the question of Kuwaiti prisoners and detainees [in Iraq] took up a considerable part of the meeting with the Russian officials. He added that he felt a clear interest and acute follow up in this humanitarian problem. [passage omitted]

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Interior Ministry 'Source' Deplores Explosion in Bahrain

LD1801192096 Riyadh Saudi Arabian Television Network in Arabic 1830 GMT 18 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has declared its condemnation and denunciation of the incident of the detonation of an explosive charge last night at the Meridian Hotel in Bahrain. An informed source in a statement made to the Saudi News Agency [SPA] said that the kingdom strongly condemns this terroristic act, which aims to attempt to disturb stability in the fraternal State of Bahrain. The source reaffirmed that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was following with profound anxiety the situation that has arisen and wishes Bahrain — amir, government, and people — a continuation of the political and social stability. [passage omitted]

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Saudi Source Says Saddam 'Still a Risk,' No Rush Toward Israel

MM1901111996 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 19 Jan 96 pp 1, 4

[Report by Amir Taheri: "High-Ranking Saudi Source Tells AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT: Media Campaigns Will Not Cause Us To Rush for Peace"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Riyadh — Five years after the liberation of Kuwait, the chances of relations between Saudi Arabia and Iraq being normalized are still meager. There is no possibility of a positive development occurring in their relations as long as Iraqi President Saddam Husayn continues to pursue his reckless policies, as an authoritative Saudi source put it to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT. The source said that "Saddam is a criminal who has slaughtered his people, so how can such a person be trusted?"

However, the source added that Saudi Arabia is very interested in strong relations with the people of Iraq, on the grounds that they are an important Muslim and Arab people.

Explaining this, he said: "We have the longest border with Iraq, and everyone is aware of our desire for the best of relations with that people. But Saddam is still a risk. No one trusts him. Even (former U.S. President) George Bush now regrets having allowed Saddam to remain in power in Baghdad."

The high-ranking official said that, "nevertheless, our relations with the states that supported Saddam five years ago have developed. We have developed our relations with Jordan, we have normalized relations with the Palestinian Authority, 'Arafat visited Riyadh recently, and relations with Yemen are moving in the right direction." "With regard to Sudan, relations are almost normal. But Iraq is a different issue."

The official said that the minimum Saddam Husayn must do is to respond fully and unconditionally to all the UN and Security Council resolutions, and he should know that "we are not joking when we insist on this point."

The Saudi official pointed out that the Kingdom supported Iraq in its war with Iran because at the time Iran posed a threat to Saudi interests in the region.

The official stressed that Saudi Arabia has no permanent enemies, and that its policies are based on its national interests.

The official pointed out that Saudi Arabia supported peace efforts in the Middle East and accepted the fact that Egypt and Jordan signed peace agreements with Israel while the Palestinians are busy with their special arrangements with the Hebrew state.

However, the official stressed that "no one should expect us to embrace Israel." All Arab rights should be taken account of, fully. And Syria and Lebanon should recover all their territories occupied by Israel.

The official said: Saudi Arabia considers Israel a reality, but not a beast threatening us. However, they [the Israelis] must realize that "we do not agree to the frantic rush toward them."

The high-ranking Saudi official accused some Zionist circles of being behind the organization of media campaigns against Saudi Arabia in the West.

He said that these campaigns will not succeed, because "we draw up our policies according to our circumstances, and no one can compel us to speed up or slow down any issue." He stressed that relations with the United States remain "friendly and staunch," and they are based on the strategic option adopted by the Kingdom in the days of its founder, the late King 'Abd-al-'Aziz Bin-Sa'ud.

Yemeni-Iranian Joint Cooperation Committee Meets in Yemen

Yemeni Minister, Iranian Counterpart Address Committee

JN1701191596 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 17 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Yemeni-Iranian joint cooperation committee held its meeting at the Planning and Development Ministry this morning under brothers 'Abd-al-Qadir Ba-Jammal, deputy prime minister and minister of Planning and Development, and Gholam Reza Foruzesh, minister of construction jihad in the Islamic Republic of Iran. Members of the committee from both sides attended.

At the outset, brother Ba-Jammal welcomed the Iranian side, noting the importance of the meeting and the issues on its agenda. He reviewed a number of areas of cooperation in which relations of cooperation with the Islamic Republic of Iran can be strengthened and promoted, foremost of which is Iran's contribution to the free zone investments in Aden, whose port is regarded as a natural gateway for Iranian trade with East Africa. Areas of cooperation also include establishing companies in the field of fishing and marine transportation, constructions, and investment in mineral exploration, as well as promoting cooperation in other fields.

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Ba-Jammal urged members of the committee to intensify their efforts and discuss issues that have effective economic benefits for the two sisterly countries, and to translate their discussions into implementation plans.

The Iranian minister also spoke in the meeting, voicing his gratitude and that of his delegation for the hospitality accorded them. He noted the desire of the two sides to promote bilateral relations in various economic, trade, and cultural fields. He said that the committee's current session will open new horizons for bilateral cooperation by drawing up plans and programs for various fields of cooperation.

The Iranian minister reviewed the progress and economic developments of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the possible benefits that our country might reap in the various fields of economic development.

The Iranian minister expressed Iran's readiness as well as that of Iranian private sector and companies to invest in Aden's free zone. He also voiced readiness to cooperate in the field of manpower training in accordance with the two sides' desire.

The five subcommittees which emerged from the main committee then began to discuss issues on the agenda ahead of signing a bilateral cooperation protocol this evening.

Yemen's Salih Receives Iranian Minister, Letter

JN1701193696 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 17 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Lieutenant General President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih today received Iranian Minister of Construction Jihad Gholam Reza Foruzesh and his accompanying delegation. The Iranian minister conveyed a letter to the president from his brother President Hashemi-Rafsanjani, president of the fraternal Islamic Republic of Iran, dealing with relations between the two countries and ways to promote them.

The Iranian minister briefed the brother president on the outcome of the Yemeni-Iranian Joint Economic Committee, which held a session in Sanaa, as well as the results of the meeting in terms of enhancing relations between the two countries and expanding cooperation in the joint interest of the two fraternal peoples. The president asked Iranian Minister of Construction Jihad Gholam Reza to convey his greetings to President Hashemi-Rafsanjani, as well as his wishes for progress for the Iranian people.

During the meeting, the president stressed our country's concern to enhance relations between the two fraternal countries for the benefit of the two peoples' interests and the objectives of the Islamic nation.

Yemen Signs Memos of Understanding With Iran

JN1801094896 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 2000 GMT 17 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Within the framework of the second session of the Yemeni-Iranian committee meetings, held in Sanaa from 15-18 January 1996, and in consolidation of the cordial, Islamic, and brotherly relations between the two sisterly countries, two memorandums of understanding were signed this evening between Yemen and the Islamic Republic of Iran. They provide for bilateral cooperation in the various areas of development, especially health; agriculture; veterinary medicine; postal, telegraph, and telephone services; water and electricity; oil; fisheries; housing; trade and industry; and culture, education, and science.

The memorandums were signed for Iran by brother 'Abd-al-Qadir Ba-Jammal, deputy prime minister and minister of planning and development, and for the Islamic Republic of Iran by Gholam Reza Foruzesh, minister of construction jihad. [passage omitted]

Yemeni Ministers Confer With Iranian Delegation

JN1801202996 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 18 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Deputy Prime Minister brother 'Abd-al- Wahhab al-Anisi; Dr. 'Abd-al-Karim al-Iryani, the deputy prime minister and foreign minister; and Dr. Muhammad Sa'id al-'Attar, the deputy prime minister and minister of industry, oil, and mineral resources, today received separately Gholam Reza Foruzesh, Iranian minister of construction jihad, and the delegation accompanying him.

During the meeting, they discussed ways to promote brotherly relations between the Yemeni Republic and the Islamic Republic of Iran and to enhance bilateral cooperation, particularly in economic areas, because the enemies are trying to exploit the Muslims' weakness in these areas.

The two sides stressed the need to implement agreements by working out mechanisms ensuring their application on the ground in order to achieve the joint interests of the two fraternal peoples.

Brother Gholam Reza Foruzesh, Iranian minister of construction jihad and head of the Iranian side in the Yemeni-Iranian Higher Joint Committee, and the accompanying Iranian delegation left Sanaa today at the end of a visit to our country during which they participated in the committee's meetings in Sanaa. Before its departure, the delegation met with Lieutenant General President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, the House of

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Representatives speaker, the prime minister, the deputy prime ministers, and the concerned ministers.

In a statement to the YEMENI NEWS AGENCY, SABA', the Iranian minister of construction jihad praised the results of the second meeting of the joint economic committee, as well as his meetings with the brother officials. He said the meetings were very positive, pointing out that the two sides agreed to enhance cooperation in economic areas for the benefit of both countries. He added that Yemeni and Iranian officials examined views on international issues and acquainted themselves with development and construction activity in both countries, praising the serious and persistent efforts to build Yemen's infrastructure.

He also pointed out that areas of bilateral cooperation and the possibility of economic exchange between the two sides were defined. The two sides, he said, agreed to establish a joint commercial company to build Yemen's infrastructure and to jointly work in the fields of oil, gas, free zones, and training in construction and housing projects. He said that the Yemeni minister of industry, oil, and mineral wealth and several Yemeni officials will visit Iran soon to resume talks and work out final formulas on the agreements they have reached.

The Iranian delegation was seen off by the minister of construction, housing, and urban planning; brother 'Abd-al-Wali al-'Aqil, under secretary of the Ministry of Planning and Development for economic cooperation; our ambassador in Tehran; and the Iranian ambassador in Sanaa.

Yemeni Prime Minister Receives Iran's Construction Jihad Minister

JN1801203696 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 18 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister 'Abd-al-'Aziz 'Abd-al-Ghani today received Iran's construction jihad minister Gholamreza Foruzesh and the accompanying delegation. The two sides reviewed relations between the two sisterly countries and discussed the meetings of the joint Yemeni-Iranian economic committee held in Sanaa and the positive results of these meetings in the service of cooperation in various fields.

During the meeting, the Iranian official extended an invitation to the prime minister from his Iranian counterpart to visit Iran. The prime minister accepted the invitation, the date of which will be set later.

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Baghdad Says No Objection to 'Dialogue' on Oil Exports

JN1801122696 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1125 GMT 18 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 18 Jan (INA)—Iraq has informed the UN secretary general that it does not object to holding direct dialogue to explore the possibility of exporting a quantity of oil to purchase food, medicine, and other basic civilian needs. Iraq said this dialogue should not be linked to any preconditions imposed on it.

In a statement to INA last night, Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz said that UN Secretary General Butrus-Ghali was informed of this position in a letter delivered by the permanent Iraqi representative to the United Nations on Thursday [18 January].

Iraq's decision to take this initiative follows intensive contacts with the UN secretary general and a number of UN Security Council member states, which adopt a cordial and balanced stand on Iraq and its legitimate demands.

Baghdad is currently witnessing intensive contacts between the Iraqi diplomacy and a visiting delegation from the French National Assembly, led by Former French Foreign Minister Jean-Bernard Raimond, who met yesterday with deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz and Foreign Minister Muhammad Sa'id al-Sahhaf.

The two Iraqi officials made a comprehensive review of Iraq's relationship with the Security Council as well as of the real reasons why some parties, particularly the United States, insist on continuing the unjust blockade on Iraq and rejecting any attempt to ease or lift it.

Tariq 'Aziz said the U.S. position is "arbitrary," and constitutes an immoral and illegal violation of all bases, values, and norms in international relations, and is the main reason for the suffering, which the Iraqi people have been facing for six years.

In his statement to the INA last night, the deputy prime minister insisted that there is no change in Iraq's position on Resolution 986.

He said: We refused to deal with Resolution 986 because it contains provisions that threaten Iraq's sovereignty and national unity and because it flagrantly interferes in its domestic affairs. These are substantive issues which we cannot abandon under any circumstance.

During the UN Security Council periodic deliberations on 5 January, France proposed to dispatch a mission to Iraq to study the human suffering facing the Iraqi people and to present an accurate and credible report to the Council to inform it of the current human condition and to analyze, in detail, the social and economic sectors of life, whose deterioration greatly affected the Iraqi people.

Foreign Minister Muhammad Sa'id al-Sahhaf yesterday discussed with the visiting French delegation — which also comprises Jean- Marc Nime, from the Union for French Democracy, and Michel Fourmet, from the Socialist Party [names as transliterated] — the recent developments between Iraq and the UN Security Council and the recent French proposal, as well as the U.S. and British attempt to divert this proposal from its humanitarian objective.

Jean-Bernard Raimond voiced his understanding of Iraq's position and arguments regarding the relationship with the UN Security Council. He stressed the desire to enhance and coordinate efforts to expedite a joint action designed to end the embargo imposed on Iraq.

Reacting to the French proposal, Muhammad Sa'id al-Sahhaf said: The success or failure of the French proposal depends on the way in which the Security Council addresses the humanitarian issue in Iraq, which resulted from the unjust blockade, as well as on the Security Council's seriousness and readiness to deal objectively with facts while avoiding political considerations which prompt a minority of the Security Council members to show intransigence and adopt inhuman and illegal positions.

He added: The positive nature of the French proposal will emerge if the UN security Council allows Iraq to use its frozen assets to purchase medicine and food and all basic needs, cancels the restrictions and complications that have been added to the Sanctions Committee's methods of action when studying the offers to export basic civil commodities and materials to Iraq, and addresses the intransigence and arbitrary attitudes shown by the influential minority of the Security Council members.

Iraqi economic and financial quarters say that Iraqi assets frozen abroad amount to $4 billion, part of which were used in 1991 and some months of 1992. However, this right was paralyzed with the issuance of resolution 778 which banned the activation of paragraph 20 of resolution 687 which permits using the assets for purchasing medicines, food, and basic needs and which imposed impossible restrictions, thus depriving Iraq of the use of the assets deposited in U.S. and British banks.

Iraqi Foreign Ministry reports mention that 12 committees and teams visited Iraq since 1991 and submitted reports and studies containing detailed, accurate, and objective information on the Iraqi people's tribulation resulting from the embargo imposed on them. But, the

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UN Security Council did nothing to check the deterioration in the situation caused by the measures banning the import of food, medicines, and other basic requirements.

Observers and politicians are in agreement that by resuming its contacts with the United Nations and holding a dialogue on selling quantities of its oil in exchange for food and medicines Iraq has placed the ball once again in the court of the United Nations which should prove its credibility and that it avoids selectivity and double standards when dealing with Iraq and the Iraqi people's needs for medicines and food of which they have been deprived for more than (?six) years.

Iraqi Assembly Deputy Speaker Comments on Kuwait, Federation

JN1601193496 Amman AL-HADATH in Arabic 17 Jan 96 p 9

[Interview with Ghanim 'Aziz Khadduri, Iraqi deputy speaker of the Iraqi National Assembly, by Anwar al-Khatib in Amman on 11 January]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [al-Khatib] Are you satisfied with the final statement of the Afro-Arab Parliamentary Dialogue Conference? Do you believe the conference was fair to the Iraqi issue?

[Khadduri] The delegates' speeches were much stronger than the final statement, which miserably linked the suffering of the Iraqi people and the lifting of the blockade to the UN resolutions. We had hoped that the conference would emerge with a more balanced statement that does not link the blockade and hunger suffered by the Iraqi people to punishing Iraq for a certain political stand.

[Al-Khatib] So you are not satisfied with what the conference came out with in this regard?

[Khadduri] No, I am not satisfied.

[Al-Khatib] How do you explain this stand on the conference? Do you believe that the "venue" played a role in the final drafting of the statement?

[Khadduri] Naturally, all hosting states try to produce resolutions that are in line with their policies. The final statement, generally speaking, is in line with Jordan's general policy.

[Al-Khatib] Some time ago, there was talk about an initiative for reconciliation between the Iraqi and Kuwaiti peoples. What is the outcome of these reconciliation efforts?

[Khadduri] We tried three times to contact members of parliament in the neighboring state of Kuwait. We asked them clearly and explicitly to open a new leaf in relations between us. We also expressed our readiness to visit Kuwait. At the same time, we invited them to visit Iraq. However, they did not respond. Moreover, regrettably, they made unacceptable, illogical, and unbalanced statements. This indicates that the Kuwaitis bear grudges and pay no attention to what the Arabs have suffered as a result of the 30-state war, which is still having an impact on Iraq and its people. Therefore, it is Iraq that has the right to bear grudges toward Kuwait.

I am calling for a reconciliation between Iraq and Kuwait now and before it is too late, if there is still room for rationality in the political decisionmaking in that state.

[Al-Khatib] Does Jordan's political stand provoke you? Do you consider it an interference in Iraq's domestic affairs?

[Khadduri] Would I be allowed to talk about Jordan's domestic affairs? Is any official allowed to talk about the domestic affairs of a friendly and brotherly country? [passage omitted]

[Al-Khatib] Why do you reject the idea of federation in Iraq? Do you not believe that this proposal may protect Iraq and prevent its partition in light of the painful reality that Iraq is virtually partitioned by the 32d parallel in the south and the 36th parallel in the north?

[Khadduri] The federation question does not apply to a state like Iraq. Yes, there are Kurds in the north, but there are others too. There are Arabs and other ethnic groups. For known circumstances during the aggressive war against Iraq and because of the presence of a Kurdish opposition, foreign, particularly U.S., troops entered the area and imposed a separating line on three governorates, which are autonomous governorates. According to the Constitution, this region enjoys broad powers to run its affairs. It has Legislative and Executive Councils. It runs its affairs by itself. This situation continued until October 1991. There are Kurds in four countries neighboring Iraq, but they do not enjoy the same rights enjoyed by the Kurds in Iraq.

As for the other parts of Iraq, the people are unified. Iraq has 18 governorates, each of which has its special character. Should we give autonomy to each?

Britain and the United States are circulating false reports to the effect that Shiites live in southern Iraq, Sunnis in the center, and Kurds in the north. The advocates of federation rely on this information. I reply to them as follows: There are more Shiites than Sunnis in the center. For example, there is al-Kazimiyah region in Baghdad. There are other regions the majority of which

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are Shiites. In the south, there are Sunni tribes. The question of federation is half a century behind, given the current reality in Iraq.

I wish the advocates of federation would visit the governorates to meet the masses. They would find that there are no social differences between one governorate and another and that the social makeup in Iraq is not based on sectarian or ethnic considerations. Sects in Iraq live in all the governorates. There is no governorate that is exclusive to one sect.

I would like to stress here that the regime in Iraq is not affected by such proposals, because it is confident of its status and position among its masses, which are disgusted with such proposals.

[Al-Khatib] So you are saying that the Iraqi people reject federation proposals?

[Khadduri] They not only reject them but are also astonished at such proposals. This is because such calls are meant to divide Iraq. This will create domestic sedition. Such calls are not in the interest of our people or nation. We are pan-Arabists and we believe in Arab unity and believe in one Arab state from the Ocean to the Gulf.

[Al-Khatib] Suppose that the opposition forces abroad returned to Iraq to operate within the law that was passed recently. What position will they occupy in the political system?

[Khadduri] The laws in force in Iraq allow all Iraqis, irrespective of their political affiliation and position, to return to Iraq and exercise political activity. The exception to this is if a person had committed a crime against persons or a crime that is punishable by law. A pardon was issued earlier covering all politicians, regardless of all their affiliations. The law now allows political activity even for religious parties. Political opposition should be based in the country and not abroad so it can air its views and programs and get to know how the public views it. Those who left their country and settled in other countries, which provided them with a cover and a canopy through which they can speak about their country, are not opposition. Those people are individuals who have personal stands. They do not represent anyone back home. You can inquire if those people even have an organization, supporters, or future programs.

[Al-Khatib] Many opposition figures rejected federation and said they adhere to a unified Iraq. Does the political leadership in Iraq set any store by this stand?

[Khadduri] This indicates that federation is not a reasonable proposal.

[Al-Khatib] Do you value their stand?

[Khadduri] First of all, we do not recognize the opposition. I said that Iraq's door is open and there is freedom of expression. Anyone who claims that he is part of the opposition and who has not committed a crime punishable by law should return to Iraq where he can work freely.

Iraqi Trade Minister on Currency, Sale of State Properties

JN1801185096 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 18 Jan 96 p 13

[Report by Nivin 'Abd-al-Hadi]

[FBIS Translated Text] Iraqi Trade Minister Dr. Muhammad Mahdi Salih denied that the Iraqi Government is planning to change its currency. He said that, as part of an economic program approved at the beginning of December, the government is now looking for sources to finance the budget instead of printing banknotes.

In an exclusive statement to AL-DUSTUR, Salih said the new economic program is aimed at using available resources to curb inflation and to stop printing of currency abroad.

He also said the Iraqi Government will begin a program to sell some state properties at prices 10 percent below the local market prices so that citizens can buy them.

The government, he added, will also follow the principle of privatization in some state institutions and properties by allowing the private sector to participate in operating and financing them. Taxes on citizens with high incomes will be increased so that the Iraqi Government can implement the economic program, he said.

Iraqi Decree Authorizes Government Banks To Change Money

JN1801202496 Baghdad Iraq Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 18 Jan 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Revolution Command Council [RCC] has issued a decree authorizing specialized government banks to conduct commercial money changing, in addition to their other duties.

The following is the text of the decree:
The Republic of Iraq
The RCC
Decree No. 9
Dated: 14 January 1996

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Decree

In accordance with the provisions of Paragraph A of Article 42 of the Constitution, the RCC decrees the following:

1. Specialized government banks shall conduct commercial money changing, in addition to their other duties, in accordance with the regulations in force at commercial government banks.

2. The provisions of the service regulations that apply to workers at commercial government banks shall apply to employees at specialized government banks.

3. The minister of finance may issue any necessary instructions to facilitate the implementation of the provisions of this decree.

4. This decree shall go into effect as of the date it is published in the Official Gazette.

[Signed] Saddam Husayn, RCC chairman

Iraqi Minister Views Jordanian-Iraqi Trade Relations

JN1801201296 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 17 Jan 96 pp 20, 31

[Report on interview with Iraqi Trade Minister Muhammad Mahdi Salih by Nivin 'Abd-al-Hadi in Amman; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] Iraqi Trade Minister Muhammad Mahdi Salih has said that trade and economic relations between Jordan and Iraq are continuing as Iraq has opened the door for Jordanian merchants and businessmen to benefit from the Iraqi assets which have been frozen since 1992. These assets amount to several billion dollars in European banks and $4 billion in U.S. banks.

In an exclusive interview with AL-DUSTUR, Salih added: Jordanian-Iraqi trade relations did not begin with the embargo and its circumstances, but date back to 1974 when their foundations were laid by His Majesty King Husayn and President Saddam. These relations flourished during the period before the embargo until the volume of trade exchange amounted to $1 billion in 1989. In order to foster these relations, the two sisterly states established the Iraqi-Jordanian Joint Committee, which took several measures to achieve further cooperation.

Relations and the common interests between the two sisterly states have been affected by the blockade. However the desire to develop bilateral relations has continued. Thus, even under the embargo, bilateral cooperation in the area of trade continued. Iraq's contact with the rest of the world was done through Jordan. No doubt, this cooperation and exchange is moving in the right direction despite what Iraq is going through.

Regarding the obstacles facing Jordanian businessmen in the fields of investment and trade in Iraq, the minister said: The Iraqi policy is to strengthen bilateral trade relations. Despite some restrictions on investment in Iraq, we are looking into the possibility of attracting Jordanian and Arab investors. Regarding trade obstacles, there are no administrative or financial obstacles at all on the Iraqi side. The door is wide open for Jordanian businessman. Our trade only passes through Jordan.

Salih also spoke about the referendum which took place recently in Iraq, why it did not include the northern region, and whether this was an indication of Iraq's submission to partition. He said: The northern region is not separate from Iraq, but is under foreign control which was imposed by the U.S. forces and the daily flights below latitude 36, which operate contrary to the will of the Security Council and under the umbrella of some saboteurs in the region. However, the central authority continues to supply the northern region with food, electricity, and fuel in addition to school supplies. In general, the situation there is a state of emergency which was imposed on the Kurds against their will.

As for the referendum, it was an expression of real democracy which stems from the people's will as expressed in a free democratic manner. The referendum covered all of Iraq, including the northern region. Residents of the western areas were given the chance to vote as well. As for the repercussions of the embargo on the Iraqi economy, and the Iraqi Government's responsibility for the suffering of the Iraqi people due to its noncompliance with Security Council Resolution 986, he said: In 1990, resolutions were issued imposing an embargo on Iraq. The embargo continues to be imposed, although the reasons for imposing it have been over for over five years and the Iraqis continue to suffer. The private sector suffered most from this embargo, particularly with regard to trade in food products and oil and manipulation of prices, especially in the north.

With regard to Resolution 986, and some people's claims that Iraq is responsible for the suffering of its people because it did not agree to implement the resolution, it is noteworthy that the justifications for the embargo are no longer there, so why is the embargo still imposed? Following the 1991 military aggression, the Security Council issued Resolution 687, allowing Iraq to buy food and medicine after notifying the boycott committee. One month later, the boycott committee informed all the states that they can release frozen Iraqi assets if requested by Iraq. Thus, Iraq used

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$300 million of its assets to buy the necessary food products and distributed them to the citizens through ration cards and without foreign intervention. When the U.S. Administration saw that Iraq is quite capable of depending on itself, it issued a decision in October 1992 re-freezing the Iraqi assets. Once again, Iraq began to suffer. With respect to Resolution 986, we cannot comply with it because it is humiliating to the Iraqi citizen and will bring about foreign presence to supervise the distribution of food, in addition to the fact that it will separate the northern region from the rest of Iraq in terms of food distribution.

Iraqi Newspaper Article Views Resolution 986

96LH0060A Baghdad AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 14 Nov 95 p 6

[Article by Dr. Sami Sa'dun]

[FBIS Translated Text] Why has Iraq rejected UN Security Council Resolution 986 (April 1995)? Are there any new developments for reconsidering it? What is the reason for this strange insistence on making Iraq accept it? I am writing again on this subject to clarify what is behind the U.S.-Western false concern for the Iraqi people and the deliberate pressure and fabricated clamor about the so-called Iraq's rejection of a "humanitarian" resolution. Some people are still asking why don't we accept this resolution temporarily until Paragraph 22 of Resolution 687 is implemented because this will ease the burden on our steadfast people caused by the long unjust blockade.

First, it is a fact that Iraq has rejected UN Security Council Resolution 986 just as it did Resolutions 706 and 712 (of 1991), which were no different from it in substance or aim. Iraq rejected these resolutions for good known reasons. Iraq's position has not changed. The reason Iraq rejected this resolution, as it did the two previous resolutions, is that this one does not solve the patient Iraqi people's suffering nor does it respond to Iraq's basic concerns, which are:

1. The resolution should not affect Iraq's sovereignty and its authority over all its territory.

2. The resolution should not be a substitute to the total lifting of the blockade and should not delay the implementation of Paragraph 22 of Resolution 687, when the time comes.

Iraq is struggling to end the blockade, which was unjustly imposed on it. Its acceptance of arbitrary resolutions to destroy the weapons banned by these resolutions, allow a monitoring system, and recognize Kuwait and the borders imposed by Resolution 833 are decisive proof that the Iraqi leadership is interested in speeding up the implementation of Paragraph 22 of Resolution 687.

Iraq has clearly indicated that it supports any resolution, initiative, step, or measure that would ease the burden on the people if its purpose was humanitarian and nonpolitical and took Iraq's concerns into consideration. Had Resolution 986 been like this, Iraq would have accepted it when it was issued under Resolution 706 or 712 in 1991. Iraq then was very much in need for money following the malicious aggression that affected the entire country. When the ball was returned and draft Resolution 986 was submitted (in April 1995)—which was then known as the Argentinean draft resolution—it was logical to think that the new resolution will be different from Resolutions 706 and 712. We thought that this one would address the controversial issues that caused Iraq to reject the previous two resolutions. However, the objective of those who drafted and supported Resolution 986 was to prevent and delay the implementation of Paragraph 22 of Resolution 687. A joint French-Russian draft resolution for the implementation of Paragraph 22 in stages was then circulated informally to the Security Council members.

The atmosphere was appropriate then for it, as most of the Security Council members supported the need to encourage Iraq for its cooperation with the Council and the need for the Council to fulfill its commitments toward Iraq by implementation Paragraph 22 of Resolution 687. Therefore, Resolution 986 was as ill-intentioned as the previous ones, despite the intensive contacts Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz and the Iraqi delegation held with the Security Council members, when the draft resolution was being considered last April, to prevent claims that Iraq had rejected a humanitarian resolution before it was discussed.

The resolution was passed despite the major efforts exerted by the Iraqi delegation so that the resolution would be really humanitarian and not of a deceptive nature designed to interfere in Iraq's internal affairs and delay the lifting of the blockade and steal Iraqi money on the pretext of dealing with the humanitarian situation. Therefore, during the talks and before the resolution was passed, Iraq rejected it, because no essential changes were made in it. Its aims remained unchanged—to perpetuate the abnormal situation in northern Iraq and determine a sort of relationship between Iraq and Turkey by dictating that the largest quantity of oil should be exported via the Turkish pipeline. This was unprecedented by the Security Council. Furthermore, the resolution called for the withholding of part of the oil revenues to finance the deficit suffered by the UN and its committees in Iraq. A simple calculation will show how the $2 billion in revenue would be distributed if Iraq

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agreed to the conditional sale of its oil: The resolution allocated 30 percent of the revenue, or $300 million, to the UN reparation's fund. It also allocated 15 percent, or $150 million, for the Kurds who rebelled against the authority and the law and are protected by foreign forces in part of northern Iraq.

The resolution allocated part of the revenue to cover the expenses of the UN Special Commission supervising the destruction of weapons, which Iraq was banned from possessing or manufacturing. Another 10 percent was allocated to other committees, such as the committee for the demarcation of the borders, the UNICOM forces deployed on the borders, and others. In addition, the resolution allocates funds to meet the heavy expenses involved in the implementation of the observation and distribution system, which entails administrations, employees, etc. In other words, very little money would remain from this amount to meet the humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people.

For example, the cost of the ration ticket for one month exceeds $1 million [as published]. The acceptance of a sterile resolution as this one would cause a big disappointment to the people, who are looking for at least doubling the monthly ration and improving the health situation. The acceptance of the resolution would only make very little change in the existing situation.

The main purpose of Resolution 986, therefore, is to address the UN's financial deficit and at least cover the expenses of its committees, which are implementing the blockade crime against Iraq. Its purpose is also to open the door for other people to make a living at the expense of our steadfast people. The resolution was not designed to solve our people's sufferings. It perpetuates an abnormal situation in the north and extends support for agents who have rebelled against the law. It is a wicked maneuver to maintain the blockade, frustrate Iraq's regional and international role, and keep it out of the oil market as long as possible, thus allowing the United States and its followers in the region to reap major benefits.

Resolution 986 cannot be accepted in its present interventionist form, the complex mechanisms for its implementation, and its clear tendentious aims. If some people think that the action of traitor Husayn Kamil, which has undeniably disrupted the efforts to lift the unjust blockade against Iraq and delayed the implementation of Paragraph 22, will force Iraq to accept Resolution 986, they will be deluding themselves. The patient Iraqi people will not die of hunger if the blockade is prolonged for months. They have been standing fast for more than five years.

The faithful Iraqi people have provided eloquent response to their enemies' slander, sick dreams, and unjust blockade by renewing their absolute support for their president and leader, Saddam Husayn, in this year's referendum. Can't they get the point? Struggling President Saddam Husayn's Iraq does not compromise over its firm principles and does not capitulate in the face of the most difficult conditions. It will never be shaken by the fall of one individual. If the supporters of Resolution 986 really care for the Iraqi people and the hundreds of innocent people who are killed daily because of the unjust blockade, let them call on the Security Council—before turning to Iraq—to fulfill its obligations under Paragraph 22 of Resolution 687, as Iraq has fulfilled its essential obligations regarding the banned weapons. What good is there in accepting Resolution 986, which did not contain even a partial solution to the human suffering? If the resolution, as they claim, is just a temporary solution that will help improve the atmosphere and soften the positions in the Security Council toward Iraq and not a substitute to the implementation of Paragraph 22, why don't they call for reviewing it and removing everything that affects Iraq's sovereignty and independence and is considered an interference in its internal affairs? Why don't they let Iraq choose whether to use its oil pipelines through Turkey or the south? Why don't they remove the complications in the distribution and supervision mechanism and make them clear and consistent with the humanitarian objective of the resolution? Is there anything new in the call on Iraq again to accept this resolution that takes Iraq's concerns into consideration? Does the UN secretary general have sufficient authority to establish an implementation mechanism that considers Iraq's basic concerns, whose deliberate disregard caused it to reject Resolution 986 and before that Resolutions 706 and 712?

Iraq does not reject any serious initiative, without political aims, to ease the burden on the people and serve as a step toward the imminent implementation of Paragraph 22 of Resolution 687. However, Iraq did not see anything of this sort in the so-called resolutions of "oil for medicine and food." These resolutions were designed to turn the Iraqi people into refugees—God forbids. Under these resolutions, the UN is offering the Iraqi people help using their own money. It is imposing interventionist conditions affecting Iraq's sovereignty and independence. The UN

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wants to force Iraq to export the bigger quantity of the oil through the Turkish pipeline to reward Turkey for its support of the aggression against Iraq and perpetuate the abnormal situation in Kurdistan, thus promoting partition. The resolutions also promote the plundering of Iraq's resources to finance the UN operations in blockading Iraq and starving its people. The mere acceptance of these resolutions means delaying the implementation of Paragraph 22 indefinitely, as the enemies of humanity will try to prolong the blockade as much as possible. For all these reasons, Iraq has refused to accept Resolution 986.

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Peres on Peace With Jordan; Palestinian, Israeli Elections

TA1901055096 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0505 GMT 19 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Shim'on Peres has said that those who dare win. Therefore, Israel is currently seeking peace with all its neighbors. Our political correspondent spoke with the prime minister last night in Elat following the signing of an agreement with Jordan's Crown Prince Hasan. Mr. Peres also commented on the Palestinian and Israeli elections:

[Begin recording] [Peres] This is really an unprecedented, historic visit. We have secretly dreamed of this all our lives, that the day would come when al-Aqabah and Elat would meet, abolish the border between them and this is what is happening. This is a peace that will become a reality.

[Raz] Mr. Peres, the Palestinians are holding elections tomorrow. What are your expectations? Will it resemble the peace with the Jordanians?

[Peres] No, it will be different. Clearly, I assume that 'Arafat will be elected. It will be very interesting to see whether the Palestinians are capable of creating a democratic society.

[Raz] Are they indeed capable of doing this?

[Peres] There are many intelligent people among them who deeply want this; however, this like everything else in life is part of a process.

[Raz] Incidentally, Mr. Peres, there were some reports that Yasir 'Arafat appointed a governor for Jerusalem.

[Peres] I do not believe this, and even if he indeed made such an appointment it has absolutely no significance.

[Raz] I understand that our next goal is Syria.

[Peres] Our next goal is achieving a comprehensive peace in the Middle East. Despite all the criticism.... [pauses] Look, one has to be daring. Those who do not dare are not realistic. We are going for the whole pot.

[Raz] And this should not be linked to the date of elections?

[Peres] No, this and elections are two different things.

[Raz] What about a date for the elections?

[Peres] Look, if it proves possible to run the government until 29 October, I will prefer to do so. If it come about that this is impossible we will draw the appropriate conclusions.

[Raz] And has this question been clarified yet?

[Peres] Not yet.

[Raz] Thank you, Mr. Peres. [end recording]

Peres Cited on King Husayn's Visit, Relations With Jordan

JN1801132896 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 18 Jan 96 p 1, 7

[Report on interview with Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres by P.V. Vivekanand in Jerusalem; date not given]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Israel has very warm feelings towards Jordan and is determined to help the Kingdom and make an economic success of the state of the peace between the two countries, Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres has said.

Mr. Peres also paid high tribute to His Majesty King Husayn and said the Monarch had captured the hearts of the Israeli people, particularly with the visit he paid to the Jewish state on 10 January.

"His Majesty has shown what a civilised leader can do for his people," Mr. Peres said in an interview with the Jordan Times at his office in West Jerusalem. "(The King) came specially to visit two injured pilots, spent the day, (and) he was very moved," the prime minister said of His Majesty's visit to Israel, where he also visited two Jordanian soldiers undergoing treatment.

Mr. Peres said the Israeli people were moved by the King's "great personal feelings" towards assassinated Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin, and said the Monarch had "great eloquence" and "a human touch wherever he moves."

"I think he took the heart of the Israeli people," he said, adding that he himself was "very much" affected emotionally by the King's visit, described by Israelis as having drawn the biggest crowd that ever cheered a visiting head of state through Israeli stre[illegible].

Other points Mr. Peres made in the interview were:

— Israel finds little need for the international guarantees that Pope John Paul called for to preserve the religious status of Jerusalem because the Jewish state is committed to respecting the religious rights of all in the Holy City.

"Jerusalem should be religiously open to all religions," but "politically it cannot be run by two different parties."

Reminded that this obviously meant a predetermination of one important element in the final status negotiations with the Palestinians beginning in May, he said. "We are stating our own position and we are not stating anyone else's position."

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"We have said time and again that we are not going to change status quo (in East Jerusalem) generally. We are not going to enter into the status quo concerning the inner Muslim arrangements. Whatever was affiliated with Jordan or the Palestinians (when Israel occupied East Jerusalem in 1967), it belongs to them."

Mr. Peres skirted a question on Israel's intentions concerning Palestinians living in Diaspora by referring only to the multilateral committee discussing the fate of displaced Palestinians, which, he said is "trying to find solutions."

He said Israel's contacts with the Gulf states were continuing and Jordan could play a key role in advancing them.

"We are in contact to reach an understanding. I think Jordan can play a leading role in it. Some of our meetings with the representatives of the Gulf states took place in Jordan. I think after the Amman conference (the Oct. 29-31 Middle East and North African economic summit), Jordan has gained the status and respect for the Jordanian Kingdom and its King in the eyes of many."

There are "indications" that some of the Gulf countries will announce diplomatic ties with Israel soon, but "I would not like to indicate them before the indications become realities."

— Jordanians should not wait for a final Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement before moving to consolidate relations at the popular level with Israel.

"The Egyptians are not waiting for the Jordanians (and) the Palestinians are not waiting for the Jordanians," he said. "The process goes simultaneously, but not on a conditional way."

According to Mr. Peres, Israel made peace with the Palestinians "out of its own free choice and free will" and no doubts should be cast on Israel's intentions to negotiate a final settlement with the Palestinians in good faith.

"We have fulfilled every article in the (Oslo) agreement on the dot and on the date. Nothing was postponed. The second Oslo agreement was implemented in two months.

"There was never a Palestinian authority, there was never a Palestinian territorial address in history and the Palestinians were never in charge of their education, police or commerce," he said. "Now this was given to them in a silver platter.

"Nobody forced us to do so and we did it in the face of very heavy opposition," he said, adding that Mr. Rabin "paid for it with his life because of it."

"We have shown our intentions," he said, describing the 20 January Palestinian self-rule elections as revolutionary.

"Israel is neither weak nor poor but it does not want to dominate the Palestinians. I don't think Israel needs to ask for a credit card."

— The way to fight extremism is to raise the standard of living of the people and the international community should contribute to building "the infrastructure of a modern economy" in the region.

"The higher the standard of living, the lower the standard of violence. It is because of this that we are trying to develop economic activity. It is not for us but it is for the future of all of us.

"Poverty, bitterness, and disappointment shape the ground for violence and hatred. So we have to go the right way and it is a long way."

The world community should help to ensure that "all people and every people will have the ability to enjoy an economic take-off and reach the heights of income, social and economic, which exist in many parts of the world."

Mr. Peres rejected charges that Israel was impeding Jordanian exports to the Palestinian territories for considerations of its own commercial interests and said his country was encouraging Jordanian trade based on competition.

"We are not stingy and we will not be narrow-minded in our approach," he said, noting Israel has allowed the export of Jordanian products into its own market but that the very concept of trade warranted competition. But, "we are doing it with a big deal of goodwill because we have deep feelings for Jordan."

"We want to make the (political) Jordanian-Israeli relationship a real success story in economic terms as well," said the prime minister, specially referring to development projects in the Jordan Rift Valley, expansion of the Aqaba airport and cooperation between Jordanian and Israeli private sectors.

Economic dividends of peace would take time to materialise — "two, three years, (and) we cannot watch it with a stopper in our hands" — but Jordanian-Israeli agreements on cooperation in various fields and studies on joint projects have "planted the seeds and prepared the ground."

"There are many beginnings in a very wide fields of domains," he said.

Israel is also seeking to develop joint projects with Jordan involving sophisticated technology, and "I don't

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have the slightest doubt that the Jordanian people will soon begin to see a real increase in their per capita" income, he said.

Mr. Peres dismissed assertions that Israel was seeking economic domination of the region. "The whole idea, as expressed by some circles in the Middle East, that Israel is going to dominate the Arabs is nonsense," he said. "Modern economy is not based on domination but free market competition.

"Israel's exports do not depend on the exports of vegetables or something to the Palestinians or to Jordan. Israel is basically dealing in hi-tech, and our markets are in Europe, in Japan and other countries, and our interest in dealing with Jordan was not based on economic reasons."

Israel, Mr. Peres said, has "nothing but extremely positive feelings and good wishes for our Jordanian neighbour."

"We respect the Jordanian independence, the Jordanian judgment, the Jordanian culture, and we hope to live as good neighbours."

Rabinovich Calls For 'Crucial' Decisions in Syria Talks

TA1901064296 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0600 GMT 19 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Itamar Rabinovich, Israel's ambassador to the United States, believes that despite the coming elections in Israel and the United States, crucial decisions must be made in the negotiations with Syria and important issues, such as security arrangements on the Golan Heights and the distribution of water resources, must be discussed. Although the elections will affect the talks with Syria, these issues must be discussed as though elections were not on the horizon.

Ambassador Itamar Rabinovich was speaking at a Washington research institute. He stressed that Israel would not sign an agreement with Syria unless it included a commitment to stop Hizballah activity in south Lebanon.

Ambassador Rabinovich noted that President al-Asad had expressed readiness to sign a peace agreement during 1996 and to discuss normalization with Israel. Nevertheless, Syria has not dropped its demand for a full Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights.

Our correspondent Hayim Zissowitz stressed that Ambassador Rabinovich denied that Israel had asked for $12 billion from the United States as part of an arrangement with Syria. Israel has not asked for any general aid nor requested the United States to dispatch American soldiers to the Golan Heights since these issues are contingent on the nature of the agreement that will be achieved with Syria.

Baraq Comments on Palestinian Elections, Leaves for Morocco

TA1901075096 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0505 GMT 19 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq says that after Yasir 'Arafat is elected, Israel will be able to demand firmer action against terrorism and the abrogation of the Palestinian Covenant. Our correspondent Shlomo Raz spoke with the foreign minister at the signing ceremony of the agreement with Jordan in Elat before leaving on a visit to Morocco. During the interview, Baraq revealed that he visited Morocco while serving with the IDF [Israel Defense Forces]. Baraq started off by addressing the elections in the territories.

[Begin recording] [Baraq] I believe that 'Arafat will be elected. This will mark the beginning of a new stage that will, on the one hand, strengthen 'Arafat's hold and legitimacy as the elected leader of the Palestinians, and on the other hand, give more weight to our demands regarding our relations, seeing as he will now become the elected leader of his people with an obligation to implement the agreements he signed in both his and their name to halt terrorist attacks and revoke the Palestinian Covenant. We will demand both of these things more firmly with the abrogation of the Covenant to a certain degree constituting a condition for the real continuation of the negotiations.

[Raz] Over the past few days, you have been constantly reiterating the need for the Palestinian Authority [PA] to fight terrorism. Has something happened? Have the Palestinians eased the pressure on this issue?

[Baraq] No, I constantly say this to the public. We have simply not had the opportunity to discuss these matters. This issue, however, is more important to the Palestinians themselves, including 'Arafat personally, as well as his men. This is a crucial test because unless peace gradually brings about a halt in terrorist attacks — even if this is not 100 percent; after all, some attacks have taken place even in our time — then the Israeli public will not benefit from one of the most important fruits of peace. I believe this is achievable, necessary, and both sides should insist on it.

[Raz] Foreign Minister Baraq, you will leave for Morocco in a few hours.

[Baraq] I consider this an important visit. Morocco is a very important country in North Africa which has grad-

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ually, over the course of many years, forged relations with Israel. I am very happy happy to visit Morocco. I visited this country under other circumstances. I met with the king over 15 years ago.

[Raz] Could you reveal these circumstances to us?

[Baraq] Circumstances that were typical at the end of the 1970's and which still cannot be discussed publicly.

[Raz] Is it possible that Morocco will change its position on the Jerusalem issue? After all, the Moroccan king is head of the Arab League's Jerusalem Committee.

[Baraq] I do not think that Morocco will change its position in the next few days. Nevertheless, relations between Israel and Morocco are developing and reflect very positively on Israel's relations with other North African countries we are holding contacts with, as well as with the Palestinians. Over the years, the king of Morocco has consistently made a very positive contribution to the promotion of peace, understanding, and calm. [end recording]

[Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew at 0500 GMT on 19 January carries a report by political correspondent Udi Segal which adds that "Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq said that the talks on security arrangements with the Syrians next week in Washington will be initial discussions that will not deal with kilometers, border lines, or practical matters. Major Generals Dani Yatom and 'Uzi Dayan will join the Israeli negotiating team headed by Uri Savir. As for the issue of water, the parties feel that it is possible to reach an agreement. The foreign minister said that the Syrians understand that all the water that flows into Lake Tiberias must stay ours under any peace arrangement." The report goes on to note that "Brigadier General Brom, the head of the IDF Planning Branch's Strategic Planning Department, and Lieutenant Colonel Moshe Sinai, who is attached to the Foreign Ministry will also be a part of the delegation to these talks." In a recorded passage, Baraq notes that Israel will demand: "demilitarized zones, thinned out zones, bilateral visits, hot lines, the prenotification of military exercises, mutual controls, mutually agreed upon limitations on troop deployments, agreed upon changes in military formations, and so forth. All these issues must be discussed and it will take a long time." When asked to compare the nature of peace that can be expected with Syria to Israel's peaceful relations with Jordan, Baraq says: "One must remember that this is a network of relations that has been established over decades. One cannot expect us to surmount the suspicions and memories of the past within such a short time. It will take some time before our meetings with the Syrians take on the atmosphere prevailing here in Elat today."]

Rabinovich on Talks With Lebanon, Change in Syrian Attitude

TA1901053196 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0500 GMT 19 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Itamar Rabinovich, Israel's ambassador to Washington, says that Israel and Lebanon are about to begin serious negotiations in the near future. In a speech at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Ambassador Rabinovich said that Lebanon join the rapidly progressing peace process was one of the results of Secretary of State Warren Christopher's recent talks with Syrian President al-Asad in Damascus. Rabinovich added that there was a revolutionary change in al-Asad's attitude toward the discussions with Israel. This was evidenced by the sharp reduction in the number of terrorist attacks from Lebanese territory against Israel and its allies in south Lebanon. Someone is trying to signal us and we have received the message, Rabinovich said.

Internal Discussions on Israeli-Syrian Water Issue Reported

TA1901115696 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 19 Jan 96 p A1

[Report by Aluf Ben]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] "The Israeli-Syrian water problem can be solved pragmatically while taking Israel's genuine needs into consideration." This statement was made by a senior U.S. official at a meeting with reporters on 17 January in Tel Aviv. He added that "no discussion on the water issue has been held to date. The Syrians informed us of their stand in general terms, and we are under the impression that a pragmatic solution is attainable."

The water issue will first come up for discussion at the upcoming round of talks between the Syrian and Israeli delegations at Wye Plantation, Maryland. Noah Kinarti, a prime minister's aide in charge of the water issue in the bilateral negotiations, said at preliminary internal discussions in Israel that in the event of withdrawal from the Golan Heights, the Syrians will be able to utilize one-third of the total water currently flowing into Lake Tiberias.

It was further stated at the discussions that there is concern about the risk of Lake Tiberias water pollution as a result of Syrian activities on the Golan, and that solutions guaranteeing ecological conservation after the withdrawal should be formulated.

Prime Minister Shim'on Peres said at this week's meeting of the ministerial team for political negotiations that

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the water issue has to be solved on two levels: a bilateral Syrian-Israeli arrangement and a regional arrangement that would include Turkey as a water supplier to neighboring countries. A senior Israeli source told HA'ARETZ: "A combined solution will be eventually necessary. The Syrians will pledge to stop terror and receive water from Turkey." [passage omitted]

The annual quantity of water in the Golan Heights catchment basin stands at about 600 million cubic meters [MCM], all of which is utilized by the Israeli water economy: 250 MCM in the Dan River, 120 MCM in Baniyas, 120 MCM in al-Hasbani, 60 MCM in the armistice line springs, 35 MCM in Golan Heights reservoirs and drills, and some 15 MCM in Hamat Gader.

According to Israeli water experts, "the water resources in the event of withdrawal from the Golan are liable to lessen by as much as 200 MCM, in the event the Syrians invest a supreme engineering effort, build basins for floodwater and pump Banias water to Damascus."

The experts further estimate that the Syrians will be able to utilize some 100 MCM water from the Golan catchment basin without making major engineering efforts or financial investments. They say the Syrians will appreciate the Israeli-built water plant on the Golan which utilizes 35 MCM water annually. The Golan settlements' Water Association has set up a system of catchment basins which annually intercept some 30 MCM of water which flowed previously into Lake Tiberias. An additional 5 MCM is pumped in drills near Aloney Habashan.

Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq's statement that Israel will expect to retain the water currently flowing into Lake Tiberias seems to leave the Syrians with the Golan water plant. Since that water flowed into Lake Tiberias prior to 1967, Israel will be possibly able to present the water plant delivery as a gesture to the Syrians.

Baraq Comments on Process With Palestinians, IDF's Strength

TA1801122796 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1005 GMT 18 Jan 96

[Report by Yo'av Ya'aqov]

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq said today that the Palestinian Authority [PA] will be tested by its struggle against terrorism and the amendment of the Palestinian Covenant two months after the PA Assembly is established. Speaking at Blich High School in Ramat Gan, Baraq said:

[Begin Baraq recording] We intend to keep our part of the agreement as we signed it, but we expect the Palestinians to keep their part, including two major elements: First, fighting terrorism, not only after attacks have been carried out but before in order to frustrate and eliminate them. This includes fighting the Islamic Jihad and Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement]. This has not been happening to the fullest and not in the way we mean it. The other thing is to abolish the Palestinian Covenant. We mean that this should be done honestly and directly, without playing tricks or being shrewd. These two things are conditions, and if they are not met eventually, the process with the Palestinians will not go on. 'Arafat knows this. He heard it from us, from me personally, in the presence of his men and in private. The Covenant should be abolished two months after the assembly is established. [end recording]

The foreign minister said that Israel will present clear stands in the negotiations on the permanent arrangement which are to begin in four months.

[Begin Baraq recording] Our stand will be that we demand Israeli control over the 'Etzyon Bloc, the bloc of settlements in northern Samaria, changes to be made along the line, and the security and settlement hold of the Jordan Rift Valley, along with a broad corridor. This means that most of the settlers and settlements will be under our rule even in the permanent arrangement. I believe that in the current, somewhat delicate situation, before the talks start, it would not be right to say more. [end recording]

Referring to the issue of advancing the elections, the foreign minister said that from the government's point of view, the right thing to do is to hold the elections on time, in October, unless the opposition makes it hard for the government to focus on its missions.

[Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew at 1100 GMT on 18 January carries a similar report by Adam Shuv. In a recorded passage, Baraq tells the Ramat Gan students that the things that protect us are "the Iraqi defeat in the Gulf war, our special relations with the United States, the IDF's [Israel Defense Forces] might, and, above all, the fact that the leaders and peoples of the Arab world see Israel as a nuclear superpower." Baraq further says: "If left without a choice, the IDF will defeat the Syrian Army on the battlefield, and an army that can defeat the Syrian Army in combat has no reason to fear 63 or 163 light armored vehicles in the possession of the Palestinians."]

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Closure To Be Imposed on Palestinian Territories 19 Jan

TA1801201796 Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 18 Jan 96

[Correspondent Kobi Marenko video report]

[FBIS Translated Text] Security sources today said that the Palestinian Authority [PA] is not taking tough measures against Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] despite the possibility of a terrorist attack against Israel. The sources claimed that the reason for this was that the PA believed that a terrorist attack avenging the assassination of Yahya 'Ayyash would help let off steam in the territories and make things easier for the PA. Our correspondent Kobi Marenko reports:

[Begin Marenko recording] The security forces are deeply concerned about the possibility of a terrorist attack which might occur any day. Senior security sources today marked Sunday, 21 January, the first day following the Palestinian elections, as a likely date for violent incidents. Due to this concern, a closure will probably be imposed on the territories. The security sources' concern is the result of information according to which the PA has not been doing all it can over the past few weeks to prevent a terrorist attack. Almost all the PA's activities against Hamas were called off in the wake of 'Ayyash's assassination. There have been no arrests, and houses are hardly being searched. The PA has barely searched for the suicide terrorist reported to be in the Gaza Strip. The assessment is that the PA believes that a terrorist attack against Israel will lower the tensions that have accumulated in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank following The Engineer's assassination.

Today, the deputy chief of staff said that terrorism had almost become a strategic weapon — this, due to its ability to halt the peace process. The defense establishment fears that after the elections, there will be a greater chance of Hamas' carrying out a terrorist attack. Against this background, the ministerial committee on Shin Bet affairs will meet next week. A senior political source told us that there will be no opposition to extending the permits for the use of special measures when interrogating Hamas and Islamic Jihad activists.

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 1900 GMT on 18 January reports that "prior to the elections to the autonomy council, the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] will impose a closure on Judaea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip starting at 0400 [0200 GMT] tomorrow morning. The closure will be in force until 21 January. Security sources told our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem that the closure is intended to prevent Israeli right-wing radicals from reaching the ballot boxes in Area B, the rural area in which approximately 800 ballot boxes will be stationed. An IDF spokesman reported that the entry of media correspondents, Palestinian notables, and election observers will be permitted. Palestinians will also be permitted to enter Israel in special humanitarian cases. At the same time, Israel and the Palestinians have agreed to operate a telephone hot line in order to deal with any problems that might crop up on election day. Our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem reports that the line will operate between the offices of Major General Oren Shahor, the coordinator of activities in the territories, and Abu-Mazin [Mahmud 'Abbas], the head of the Palestinian central election committee, whose headquarters are in Gaza."]

Israel Begins Operating 'Joint Command Room' for Palestinian Elections

TA1801160296 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1500 GMT 18 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A short while ago, Israel began operating the joint command room, which is helping the Palestinians conduct the autonomy elections.

Our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem reports that the command room is situated at the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] headquarters in Judaea and Samaria. The facility will be used by Colonel Moshe El'ad, the head of Israel's security coordination mechanism, and representatives of the Palestinian Police, the Civil Administration, the Israel Police, and the international observer force.

'Arafat's 'Failure' in East Jerusalem Viewed

TA1701151896 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 17 Jan 96 p 5

[Commentary by Pinhas 'Inbari: "'Arafat's Rhetoric Hides His Real Concerns"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The killing of 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam field commander Yahya "The Engineer" 'Ayyash caught Palestinian Authority [PA] head Yasir 'Arafat in the midst of what appeared to be a triumphant odyssey through West Bank cities evacuated by the IDF [Israel Defense Forces].

It also seemed the killing of 'Ayyash embarrassed 'Arafat just as he was drawing some satisfaction from the start of his rule on the West Bank.

In fact, the opposites are true.

'Arafat's "glorious" tour of West Bank cities should not mislead us.

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'Arafat may correctly attribute to his political skills the very fact of expanding Palestinian rule in the major centers of population.

Nonetheless, he failed to impose his view of the "politically correct" future regime the Palestinians of the West Bank should adopt.

The obvious conclusion is that while 'Arafat may well be elected in the coming Palestinian elections, he will not win the election itself. In other words: 'Arafat the person will win; the 'Arafat platform will fail.

What is most frustrating to 'Arafat is his failure in East Jerusalem.

This specific failure was seen in 'Arafat's edginess in the case of the East Jerusalem journalists Mahir al-'Alami and Bassam 'Id, who were threatened with detention by PA security.

The low level of voter registrations in the city has angered 'Arafat almost as much as his failure to impose his political will on the Fatah candidates there.

Jerusalem is central to 'Arafat's political agenda. A political failure there might even force him to reconsider that agenda, inconceivable as that may seem right now.

"I shall educate the Jerusalemites," 'Arafat told his inner circle while he was in Bethlehem, according to Palestinian sources. His address to the cheering crowds in Manger Square disguised his real mood concerning his position in East Jerusalem.

The abduction of the two journalists should be seen as part of the "education" of Jerusalemite Palestinians 'Arafat mentioned in Bethlehem.

What were the real bones of contention between 'Arafat and East Jerusalem leaders?

While 'Arafat conceived the new council as no more than another PLO institution under his control, East Jerusalem leaders beg to differ. They see it as an authentic body of the Palestinians in the territories and one which will express their unique perception of the permanent settlement.

'Arafat wanted to turn the future council into just another PLO institution by imposing the PLO's "quota" system — agreeing with the various forces taking part in the elections on the distribution of seats prior to the elections themselves. This is a tactic to strip the actual ballot of real content

'Arafat first tried to insert the quota system via the allocation of secured seats for the Christian and Samaritan communities in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. He would later secure seats for Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement], neatly fixing the quota system in place.

It was most important for 'Arafat to demonstrate a quota list in Jerusalem, securing Christians. However, the most prominent Christian candidates in East Jerusalem, such as Hanan 'Ashrawi and Hanna Sinyurah, declined to play the 'Arafat game, especially when they saw he would opt for less than famous candidates.

In fact the only big name on 'Arafat's list is Abu-'Ala' [Ahmad Quray']. The informal Fatah lists — competitor lists in fact — such as 'Ashrawi's or Dr. Anis al-Qaq's are stronger than 'Arafat's.

Dr. al-Qaq, the former director-general of Nabil Sha'th's Ministry of International Cooperation is a well-known East Jerusalem Fatah leader with a well-established record of Fatah activity.

Of no less importance than 'Ashrawi's own challenge to 'Arafat were the people going with her. There is Hajj 'Abd Abu-Dhiyab, another prominent Fatah name in East Jerusalem who is considered one of Faysal al-Husayni's supporters.

Moreover, there was some surprise that on 'Ashrawi's list would be Mahmud Labadi. His importance in Palestinian history is beyond dispute; he was one of 'Abd-Rabbuh's people who published the first intifadah leaflet and established the original Unified Command of the Uprising.

Was it 'Abd-Rabbuh's readiness to accept the 'Arafat "quota" system that drove Labadi and others to defect?

To 'Arafat it was particularly important to run an agreed list for East Jerusalem.

Not only would this show his tactical outlook dominated internal Palestinian disputes, but it would help underscore to the outside world his claim on East Jerusalem.

Hence his frustration. If the Palestinians of East Jerusalem are rejecting 'Arafat's way, who will adopt it?

Nor are his problems limited to Jerusalem.

Last week at Bi'r Zayt University, the West Bank Fatah movement abolished the intifadah strikes on the ninth of every month. This clearly snubbed 'Arafat's calls in his West Bank speeches "to deliver on the message of the intifadah."

To counter his difficulties with his troublesome West Bank Fatah mavericks, 'Arafat pursued reconciliation, on his conditions, with Hamas.

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Israel's Aloni Seen Not Forming Party; Tzaban Announces Resignation

TA1801213696 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 18 Jan 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Meretz leaders expressed the assessment that Minister Shulamit Aloni will not form an independent party prior to the 1996 elections — this, on the basis of a personal promise she made to several Meretz Knesset members. Today, Minister Ya'ir Tzaban also officially announced his own resignation. Tzaban criticized Aloni and expressed support for Minister Yosi Sarid. [passage omitted]

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'Arafat Comments on Talks With Jordan's Prime Minister

JN1801150396 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 18 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] His Excellency Prime Minister al-Sharif Zayd Bin Shakir met with Yasir 'Arafat, head of the Palestinian National Authority, at the guest palace today. Royal Court Chief Marwan al-Qasim attended the meeting.

His excellency the prime minister said that the Jordanian Government, at His Majesty King Husayn's directives, is eager to have the Palestinian people attain their legitimate rights on their soil and establish their independent state, and to offer all possible assistance to develop and activate the performance of the various Palestinian institutions and agencies that will be required by the new era in the areas from which Israel has withdrawn.

Foreign Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti and PLO Executive Committee Member Hani al-Hasan also attended the meeting.

Following the meeting, 'Arafat spoke to the press:

[Begin recording] ['Arafat] In fact, this is a quick visit. God willing, there will be a longer visit following the elections. I explained to his excellency the prime minister and the brothers who were with him the dimensions of what took place between us and the Israelis with respect to some of the obstacles which hamper the elections in Hebron and Jerusalem. Vice President Al Gore and the [former] Portuguese President who heads the international observers since he is the European Union representative, promised me to solve this issue.

God willing, these problems will be solved and the elections will be held everywhere according to what was agreed, in a democratic and brotherly atmosphere of which we are proud, to consolidate the pillars of the Palestinian state, the twin — is it not so, as we agreed we are the twin brothers — whether with respect to the elections to the legislative assembly or the presidential elections which will take place on Saturday, God willing. In addition to this, there was of course another problem, of no less importance than the two other topics; the release of the detainees. Under the agreement, 1,700 of our brother detainees, including all our sisters, were supposed to have been released three months ago, another group before the elections and the last group after the elections. However, there was a delay in the implementation of the provisions of this agreement.

In any case, we discussed all these topics at this meeting. I would like to proudly say that we took over the government building in Abu-Dis yesterday. Thus, we take pride in the fact that we have taken over all the populated areas in the West Bank. God willing, this will lead us to Jerusalem where we will together pray in the al-Aqsa Mosque from where Prophet Muhammad, may God's peace and blessings be upon him, ascended to Heaven and the cradle of Christ.

[Unidentified correspondent] Mr. President, how do you view the future stage on the Palestinian level in the wake of the elections?

['Arafat] As I said, these elections are important and essential. They are the first elections for a legislative assembly on Palestinian soil. As is known, this assembly will be an indivisible part of the Palestine National Council.

[Correspondent] What are the features of the Palestinian moves in general?

['Arafat] God willing, the enhancement of this Palestinian course to implement, after this, the 3d stage as we agreed, the stage during which the talks will focus on the issue of Jerusalem and the 1948 refugees — I am one of those refugees—and the issue of the settlements and the final borders. [end recording]

Jordan's Crown Prince, Israel's Peres Comment on Accords

JN1801221096 Amman Jordan Television Network in English 2000 GMT 18 Jan 96

[Announcer-read report over video from "New at Ten" program]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Jordan and Israel signed the remaining four cooperation agreements reached between the two countries under their peace treaty. Crown Prince Hasan and Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres presided over a ceremony in al-'Aqabah this afternoon, in which Jordanian and Israeli cabinet ministers and senior officials signed the four agreements. The ceremony followed talks between the crown prince and the Israeli premier. The four agreements involved areas of cooperation in the areas of telecommunications, scientific and cultural exchange, special arrangements for al-'Aqabah and Elat, and demarcation of the maritime boundaries. Susan 'Afanah reports from al-'Aqabah:

[Begin 'Afanah recording] Fulfilling the 1994 Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty, the two countries today signed the last of 13 bilateral cooperation agreements under the patronage of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hasan and the Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres.

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The Israeli prime minister arrived in al-'Aqabah this evening and was received at the airport by Prime Minister al-Sharif Zayd Bin-Shakir. Peres later held a brief meeting with Crown Prince Hasan at the Ports Corporation Club in al-'Aqabah, the venue of the signing, where they discussed means of enhancing peace between the two countries. After the meeting, the crown prince and the Israeli prime minister attended the signing ceremony. [passage omitted] [end recording]

Susan later asked the crown prince and the Israeli prime minister about the significance of the signing ceremony in the course of peace.

[Begin recording] [Hasan] I think it is a veritable point of departure both at the international level, as I just mentioned. The visit of the Secretary of State of the United States to the region again I hope will afford us the opportunity of reviving the trilateral commission. I am very happy with the work with the European Union and, indeed, the Government of Japan. And in terms of the vision of development that has been aspired by Prime Minister Peres in terms of the Jordan Rift Valley, I am delighted that the coincidence of this meeting take place in al-'Aqabah and Elat. Bilaterally, I think that, certainly, in terms of transportation, telecommunications, in terms of visits and exchanges, in terms of practical programs, you only have to look at the very rich list of agreement to realize what is being created here today.

['Afanah] Mr. Prime Minister?

[Peres] Well, now we have a maritime line and an economic space. We marked a dividing line between our two countries, but we have also established a common space for our cooperation. For me personally, it is a dream that came true. We are very serious in our engagement and we are really so happy to see the air of understanding and cooperation, which is gaining grounds and strength everyday between Jordan and Israel. [end recording]

Peres is hosting a dinner banquet tonight in Elat for the crown prince and high-ranking Jordanian officials.

Jordan's 'Executive Committee' To Lead Opposition to Normalization

JN1801210796 Amman AL-AHALI in Arabic 18 Jan 96 p 2

["To the Point" column by Usamah al-Rantisi: "Spotlight on Resisting Normalization"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The organized Jordanian opposition last week shed spelled out its objection to the Wadi al-'Arabah accords and their requirements. The 100-man committee, the offshoot of the Jordanian popular conference for protecting the homeland and confronting normalization, held a meeting and elected an executive committee that would lead the confrontation process. As a result, the role of the conference was mapped out, and the conference became the final reference for confronting normalization and protecting the homeland.

The normalization, which the government is implementing on all levels by signing joint agreements every day, going to Tel Aviv, trying opponents of normalization, jailing some opposition symbols, or propagating the benefits of peace in investment and tourism areas in particular, should be confronted systematically by the active forces of our society.

The four Islamic Action Front deputies registered a positive stand when they left the hall of a hotel where the artistic normalization trio Nabil, Hisham, and Amal [Jordanian actors] were performing their play "Welcome to Peace" before the delegations of the parliamentary conference. The play was staged in Israeli cities, and its actors lit candles on Rabin's grave.

Al-Mustaqbal Party also registered a strong position when it finally defined its opposition to normalization and decided to join the opposition parties' coalition and participate in the Jordanian popular conference.

The al-Wihdat soccer club, which enjoys wide popular support, also registered a positive stand when it refused to play against Israeli teams.

We have repeatedly said that the clear conscience of our people still refuses to even think that the Zionists have become our cousins after the Wadi al-'Arabah and Oslo accords were signed and that the river of blood between them and us is a mere illusion that has nothing to do with the understanding of the real interests.

Crown Prince Hasan: No Jordanian 'Recipe' for Iraq

JN1901074796 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 18-19 Jan 96 pp 1, 7

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman (PETRA)—His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hasan stressed on Wednesday [17 January] that Jordan has always differentiated between the legitimate Jordanian role in helping other countries and interference in other countries' internal affairs, "which has never been our policy."

Speaking at a breakfast meeting with Kuwaiti and Iraqi participants in a seminar on "the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait" organised by the Arab Thought Forum (ATF), the Crown Prince said Jordan has never had "ready-made recipes" for other countries' problems.

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Referring to reactions by some people to a recent statement by His Majesty King Husayn saying federation might be one of the solutions to the Iraqi problem, Prince Hasan said: "It might be imperative here to stress that there is no Jordanian ready-made recipe for any Arab problem."

Prince Hasan dwelt on the indifference of the international community to the suffering of the Iraqi people and stressed the need to exploit international restructuring processes to resolve crises facing minority groups through peaceful means, as is being done in former Yugoslavia.

Prince Hasan dealt with several working papers presented to the seminar, and said scholarly work should focus on the intellectual movement since the end of the past century in order to be able to plan for a better future.

He described the ATF meeting held in Doha in April 1994 as one of the most exciting meetings, recalling a call by him and Shaykh Hamad Bin Khalifah of Qatar to have scientific dialogue as the only means to resolving problems.

"This call was favourably met by the forum members, mainly by my brothers from Kuwait, such as Dr. Hasan Ibrahim, Dr. Muhammad Rumayhi and Dr. Badriyah al-'Awad," Prince Hasan said, paying tribute to the latter, saying the seminar was her brainchild.

Prince Hasan thanked all ATF members who contributed to the success of the Doha meeting and said all of them were keen to resume discussion of the Gulf crisis and the repercussions of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in a scientific and realistic manner.

Prince Hasan also tackled an analytical study conducted by ATF members and said the study drew mixed reactions. "This study finally moved to analysing the role of the ATF and in its conclusions underlined the importance of resorting to the language of dialogue and to convene this seminar to discuss an important and complicated issue so as to prove our ability to face mental challenges together," Prince Hasan said.

In dealing with a working paper by Dr. Fadil al-Jalabi, Prince Hasan said the paper tackled in depth the economic pretexts given by Iraq for its invasion of Kuwait and the repercussions of the ensuing war. The writer concluded his paper by an important part dealing with the economic impact of the crisis on the whole region, Prince Hasan said.

He said he also read another paper by Dr. Hazim Saghiyah on "the political thought of the disaster" and described the paper as a serious attempt to analyse the Iraqi political though which led it to invading Kuwait.

He also he also read other papers by Dr. Muhammad al-Ansari on the structure of political culture and Arab political behaviour, by Dr. Yahya al-Jamal on the absence of institutionalisation, and by Dr. Hasan Ibrahim on children's education in Kuwait and Arab countries.

After reviewing these papers, Prince Hasan asked: "Was the nature of inter-Arab relations which prevailed during the oil boom period one of the reasons for the Arab position on Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and is it permissible for us to use this element in our analysis to know if our dealing with our inter-Arab relations on financial and oil bases were a reason to the laxity in these relations and a reason for not supporting the victims of aggression?"

Prince Hasan also asked if the way the Gulf war was financed was a pretext for the heavy destruction caused to the infrastructure in Iraq and the state of Arab relations in view of the Gulf war as well as the Middle East peace process, which he said was a result of the war.

The crown prince also called for means to contain wars and establish peace in addition to defining relations between Arab countries.

Crown Prince Hasan said later Wednesday said Jordan sympathises with Kuwaiti prisoners held in Iraq as it sympathises with the Iraqi people who are suffering under the international embargo imposed on their country.

Chairing the final session of the ATF symposium, Prince Hasan said the embargo should be lifted to end the suffering of the Iraqi people.

He said the ATF symposium was an intellectual meeting that does not advocate condemnation or boycott, urging the forum to make its conclusion available to the largest number of people in the Arab World.

Participants in the symposium held a press conference Wednesday and said the meeting discussed issues of extreme importance to the Arab Nation.

ATF Secretary General 'Ali Omlayl said the symposium was planned since April 1994 and has nothing to do with any recent developments.

The symposium, Dr. Omlayl stressed, is not political, but intellectual.

Dr. Muhammad al-Rumayhi, a participant, said the symposium aimed mainly to gather Arab intellectuals in their personal capacity, and did not intend to launch dialogue between Iraqis and Kuwaitis.

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Dr. al-Rumayhi said the Gulf war was a disaster and what is important at the present is to find means to get rid of the results of this disaster.

Another participant, Dr. Mahdi Hafiz, described the symposium as historical saying it was the first time that Arab discuss one of "their hot issues."

He said any solution to the problem in Iraq should be a comprehensive democratic solution that would give the Iraqi people their Arab role and status.

He commended Jordanian efforts aiming to alleviate the suffering of the Iraqi people and said other Arab countries can do the same to end the plight of the Iraqi people.

King Husayn Receives Iraqi Oppositionists During Forum

MM1801144596 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 18 Jan 96 p 4

[Unattributed report: "King Husayn Receives Iraqi Oppositionists on Periphery of Amman Symposium on Invasion of Kuwait"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Aden, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT — A symposium on the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait ended in Amman yesterday. It was attended by Iraqi and Kuwaiti figures for the first time since the Gulf war.

Jordanian Crown Prince Hasan attended the final session yesterday. He participated in the dialogue, which continued for hours.

Informed sources in Amman said yesterday that King Husayn of Jordan received some of the Iraqi oppositionists participating in the symposium.

Although the symposium sessions were held behind closed doors, the intervals between the sessions witnessed calm dialogues dealing with sensitive issues between a number of Kuwaiti participants and Dr. Fadil al-Jalabi in connection with the paper he had submitted to the symposium.

Dr. al-Jalabi criticized border demarcation between Iraq and Kuwait, telling the Kuwaitis that a port or an outlet for Iraq on the Gulf would keep Iraq within the Gulf states circle and would not compel it to look for other ports or, consequently, alliances. He called for separating the economic issues affecting the peoples' life from political issues. The Kuwaitis expressed their views which differed from Dr. al-Jalabi's views in some aspects. However, all participants discussed the various issues in a friendly manner.

Observers close to Iraqi opposition circles in Amman told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT that, although the Arab Thought Forum and Jordanian officials denied there was any political objective behind the symposium, stressing that the symposium hosted some intellectuals only, the type of people who participated in the symposium from the Iraqi side confirms that there is support for a group of oppositionists who include neutral figures not belonging to any particular quarter, especially after the failure to gather the various Iraqi opposition groups due to their varying inclinations and aims.

During the breakfast banquet organized by Prince Hasan for the participants, the crown prince addressed a number of issues concerning the Arab situation and the nature of the Jordanian position on the various issues.

On the Iraqi question, he pointed to the clamor stirred up by some people over the Jordanian position concerning a solution to the Iraqi crisis. He stressed that Jordan has always throughout its long political history differentiated between the legitimate Jordanian role and interference in others' affairs, which has never been part of our policy. Jordanian views have never taken the form of ready remedies. On what some people have said about King Husayn's statements on the federation issue, the crown prince stressed there is no ready Jordanian remedy for any Arab issue.

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Lebanese Judge Demands Death Penalty for SLA Commander Lahd

NC1801185096 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1715 GMT 18 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Judge Nasri Lahhud, the government's representative at the military court, has submitted a brief on the case of [South Lebanese Army Commander] retired Staff Major General Antoine Lahd on charges of joining the Israeli Army, assisting it to slice off part of Lebanon's territory, murdering and attempting to murder Lebanese citizens by artillery bombardment, and restricting these citizens' freedom of movement for extended periods.

Judge Lahhud demanded the death penalty for Maj. Gen. Lahd and referred the case to First Military Investigating Judge Riyad Tali' for indictment.

Lahd said that he is confident that Israel will not abandon him. In an interview with AFP, he rejected the charges leveled against him by the Lebanese authorities.

He added: I cooperate with Israel before the whole world. This cooperation, however, is not directed against the Lebanese Government.

Lebanon: SLA's Lahd Dismisses Arrest Warrant for Collaboration

NC1801182596 Paris AFP in English 1729 GMT 18 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Marjayoun, Lebanon, Jan 18 (AFP)—The commander of Israel's proxy militia in South Lebanon, General Antoine Lahd, on Thursday [18 January] dismissed an arrest warrant issued by a Lebanese military court for collaborating with Israel.

In an interview at his headquarters in the occupied "security zone," Lahd said "my conscience is clear."

But he added: "It is true. I collaborated with Israel but I do not accept accusations that I killed people".

The Israeli-equipped South Lebanon Army (SLA) helps the Israeli army defend a self-declared "security zone" in southern Lebanon designed to prevent cross-border attacks by anti-Israeli guerrillas, notably from the pro-Iranian Hezbollah movement.

Lahd, a 65-year-old Maronite Christian appointed by Israel to head the 3,000-strong SLA in 1984, is accused of helping Israel militarily in its occupation of a border zone of south Lebanon and of killing Lebanese in artillery bombardments.

He charged that the arrest warrant was timed to coincide with the resumptions of Syrian-Israeli peace talks and was politically motivated.

He also said he was "more Lebanese than anyone in Beirut" and that he was willing to "drive to Beirut now" but he did not trust any of the officials there.

"Who am I supposed to address and tell that I am not a traitor. They know me and they know I am not a traitor. This is a political measure", he said, challenging the government to admit the charges were political.

Asked if he would be willing to sacrifice himself as the price for peace, he said: "The Israelis and the Lebanese have to decide my fate together. In any case I am ready to go to Beirut and let them execute me".

"Before I used to think the Lebanese government was weak but now I feel it is ridiculous".

Prime Minister Shim'on Peres met Lahd on Wednesday in a strong show of support.

A spokesman quoted Peres lauding Lahd as "an exceptional military leader serving in one of the most exposed regions of the Middle East."

Peres called the arrest warrant "a deliberate affront against a great Lebanese patriot."

"The Lebanese government would do better to fight against terrorism and respect the SLA while studying how to integrate the force into its national army within the framework of an eventual peace agreement," Peres said.

The issue of security on the Israeli-Lebanese border is among the questions being addressed at Israel-Syria peace talks which resumed last month after a half-year break and are due to begin again next week outside Washington.

The arrest warrant accused Lahd of "enrolling in the ranks of the Israeli enemy and of helping Israel to occupy part of Lebanese territory by force."

It also charged Lahd with "killing and attempting to kill a large number of Lebanese through shelling and of carrying out terrorist activity and of commanding an armed gang."

Israel has repeatedly demanded guarantees for the future of the SLA under any peace deal with Lebanon.

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Lebanese SLA's Lahd Says 'Confident' Israel Not To Abandon Him

NC1901091096 Kafr Killa Voice of the South in Arabic 0800 GMT 19 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] South Lebanese Army [SLA] Commander General Antoine Lahd has stated that he is confident Israel will not abandon him or SLA personnel. Rejecting charges against him by the Lebanese authorities that he collaborated with Israel, Gen. Lahd said: I cooperate with Israel before the whole world but this cooperation is not directed against the Lebanese Government.

Lebanon's Junblatt, Iranian Ambassador Discuss Relations

LD1801130096 Tehran IRNA in English 1239 GMT 18 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Beirut, Jan. 18, IRNA — Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Homayun 'Alizadeh, conferred with Lebanese Minister of State for Displaced Persons Walid Junblatt, in Beirut on Thursday. The two sides reviewed ways of expanding mutual relations and latest political developments in the region as well as the current situation in Lebanon.

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Syrian Radio Urges U.S. To Check Israeli 'Inflexibility' on Peace

JN1901092996 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0545 GMT 19 Jan 96

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] In a commentary today, the newspaper AL-BA'TH addresses the European role in the peace process, describing it as important, and saying: Europe is seeking a role in the peace process due to the Arab region's multifaceted importance. There is no doubt that Europe can play a significant and principal role in the peace process. It can help to ensure the region's security and stability. Syria has repeatedly underscored the importance of the European role in the peace process, particularly since Europe is the most knowledgeable about the facts, realities, and circumstances of the region; and this qualifies it to play the role it needs to play, not only for the sake of world peace or regional peace and stability, but also for the sake of Europe and European interests. This is because Europe has maintained historical ties with the region, not to mention the various interests it has in the region.

AL-BA'TH adds: The intensive European moves in the regica must have the vitality that goes beyond formalities so as to achieve the greater objective; namely, the materialization of a vigorous European role in making the peace desired for the region. During various meetings between His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad and European officials, his excellency the president always insisted that Europe must play a special role in the peace process, given the ongoing dialogue between Europe and the Arabs. This does not necessarily mean that peace efforts must be made exclusively by the Europeans. As a matter of fact, European efforts must aid other peace efforts. When this happens, we may see more positive results in favor of just and comprehensive peace in the world at large, and not only in our region.

AL-BA'TH concludes by saying: Syria, which has made the strategic decision of working to achieve true peace in the region, believes there is a real opportunity for achieving such peace. It would be a lethal mistake to waste this opportunity. It goes without saying that a decision in this regard rests with the other side. Israel is perfectly aware of this fact, and must consequently decide to respond favorably to the requirements of such peace, chief among which is withdrawal to the 4 June 1967 borders and from southern Lebanon in accordance with Resolution 425, which is the key to the desired peace.

In one of its commentaries, the newspaper AL-THAWRAH says: There has been a deluge of Israeli statements on peace. Nonetheless, a clear Israeli commitment to the requirements of peace enshrined in the relevant international legitimacy resolutions is what would lend credence to these statements. Thus, and given the great volume of talk we have heard on the positive outcome of the Maryland talks, Israel is required to take a specific and clear position expressing full commitment to the requirements and components of the desired peace.

The paper adds: Syria has thus far made useful contributions that could lay down the foundations for true peace. It is committed to the constants of its position regarding the achievement of just and comprehensive peace. Likewise, it is opposed to all partial solutions, separate deals, and half-solutions. The past events and realities as well as the views of all world peoples' have confirmed the soundness of the Syrian position regarding the unsuitability of such deals to serve as an appropriate prelude to true peace, as Israel has claimed.

The paper goes on to say: Syria has repeatedly declared its full commitment to the bases of just and comprehensive peace, which must be grounded in the relevant UN resolutions and the U.S. initiative. Such peace must produce a complete Israeli withdrawal from the Golan to the 4 June 1967 borders, a restoration of Syrian sovereignty over Syria's entire national soil, as well as equitable [mutakafi'ah] and parallel [mutawaziyah] security arrangements.

The paper says: Syria's position will remain unchanged. It cannot abandon a single inch of its national soil. For as it has repeatedly said, territory is substance, dignity, and the epitome of the homeland. Without the return of the territory in full, there will be no peace. It is high time that Israeli procrastination and inflexibility are brought to a halt if the Maryland talks, which were deemed a fresh opportunity, are to turn into an appropriate prelude to the desired peace.

In conclusion, the paper urges the U.S. sponsor, which has managed to bring about a resumption of the Syrian-Israeli talks, to play the role of a full partner indeed by halting the Israeli obstruction of the peace process and making Israel rehabilitate the Madrid formula and the U.S. peace initiative.

In another commentary, AL-THAWRAH says: Since the start of the peace process, Syria has not changed its political discourse. Its concept of just and comprehensive peace has remained unchanged. To achieve peace, this concept must be heeded, because it is in complete harmony with the principles of international legitimacy.

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The relevant international resolutions and the land-for-peace formula, which is the bedrock of the U.S. initiative, must be complied with. During a meeting with the French foreign minister, His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad asserted that just and comprehensive peace is a Syrian demand that can be met if Israel respects others' rights and upholds the principles and resolutions of international legitimacy. Israeli rulers are well aware that peace efforts will be doomed unless rights are upheld, territories restored in full, and the relevant international resolutions are implemented.

Syrian Radio Urges Israel To Clarify Stand on Golan Pullout

JN1801171196 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1230 GMT 18 Jan 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] The peace talks will resume in Maryland, the United States, next week. By then, approximately one month will have passed since the beginning of the current round of negotiations on the Syrian-Israeli track with effective U.S. participation. During the three weeks that have passed since the beginning of this round, impressions of observers and those following the peace process have ranged from optimism to cautious optimism, and then perhaps declined among some observers to caution alone without any optimism. This has been due to a stream of Israeli statements that belong to the past, to a world that no longer exists—a world of expansion, extremism, and fanaticism. Evidently, some Israelis make statements which they consider flexible or moderate. However, these statements have implications that have a negative effect on the peace process. At this point, it must emphasized that the requirements of peace are not to be specified from the perspective of only one side to the peace process. In other words, what some Israeli officials describe as concessions, a heavy price, or a painful decision are in fact nothing but what is demanded by the international legitimacy and the UN Security Council resolutions deeming Israel's decision to annex the Golan and its consequences, such as the settlements, null and void. Earlier, the UN Security Council resolutions demanded full Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories.

Of course, we do not deny that Israeli officials made statements containing more positive than negative elements. However, we notice that these statements by Israeli officials have not yet developed into a declaration of readiness on the part of Israel to fully withdraw from the Golan and southern Lebanon. Moreover, some Israeli statements imply that the Israeli side has offered all that is required by the peace process and made available all the peace requirements. This gives the false impression that it is now Syria's turn to offer what it has in return for what Israel has offered. However, it should be noted that Israel has not offered the basic condition for peace, which is acceptance of full withdrawal. Needless to say, it is fortunate for the peace process that these Israeli implications do not convince the world public opinion, which has always expressed full confidence in Syria's sincere orientations and honest endeavor to achieve peace. We notice here that the danger inherent in these statements is not confined to their implications. Rather, they give rise to the assumption that some Israeli officials still view the peace process as nothing but a propaganda battle or a public relations exercise— for those who favor this term. This is an extremely serious view.

There is a great difference between fake peace as a propaganda, media battle and peace as a strategic option, an option which has been adopted by Syria since the beginning of the peace process. Besides, some Israeli officials view the Israeli withdrawal from the Golan in accordance with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions as simply a card in Israel's hand. We know that negotiation is a difficult process, but not an impossible one. We know that it may take a long time. So far, they have taken over four years. We know that each party has its concerns and demands of which the other party is supposed to be aware. This is one thing, but if the word card is used in the bargaining sense, then this is something else. To be more specific, the Syrian Arab identity and the legal status of the Golan as an inseparable part of the Syrian national soil are unchanging and eternal facts. They are not bargaining cards, not even over an iota of the Golan soil.

Now that Syria has offered all that is necessary to advance the peace process and after the United States assumed its role enthusiastically and vigorously as a partner to the peace process, then it is in favor of the peace process that Israel dispels all the doubts and fears that continue to be raised by its position. This would be by making its position fully clear with respect to the acceptance of full withdrawal from the Golan and southern Lebanon to the 4 June 1967 lines as a basis for complete peace and by abiding by the requirements of peace in terms of equal [mutasawiyah], parallel, [mutawaziyah], equitable [mutakafi'ah] security arrangements on both the Syrian and Israeli sides.

In light of that, it is useful for everyone to consider two important issues. The first is the time factor. Those who link, by way of pressure, between the peace process and the question of elections here or there, should remember that Syria was not the cause for wasting four years since the beginning of the peace process. If they remember this, they should

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also remember that peace is not a Syrian or Arab need only, but also a universal need. Peace is a necessary environment for man's welfare, prosperity, and security, rather than a propaganda or media process. The whole world needs peace. This has been confirmed by the U.S. Administration's new, effective role in the peace process. It has also been confirmed by the new, effective European role in the same arena. This was expressed by French Foreign Minister Herve de Charette during his trip to Damascus and the area capitals. This orientation was also expressed a few days ago by the Netherlands foreign minister and a Norwegian parliamentary delegation. The peace process was the focus of those personalities' activity in Damascus and the region.

Syria's President al-Asad Welcomes 'Effective' French Role

JN1801192996 Damascus SANA in Arabic 1725 GMT 18 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Damascus, 18 Jan (SANA)—President Hafiz al-Asad received French Foreign Minister Herve De Charette and his delegation at the People's Palace at 1330 today.

The meeting was attended by Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' and French Ambassador in Damascus Jean-Claude Cousseran.

They reviewed the situation in the region, with emphasis on the peace process. Minister de Charette said that France wishes and is looking forward to playing a more extensive and effective role in the peace process.

The president welcomed an effective French role in the peace process. He said Syria has always looked for an effective role by France to help the peace process advance toward its objective.

The president said that a just, comprehensive peace is a Syrian demand and that peace can be achieved if the parties' rights are met and if the principles and resolutions of the international legitimacy are applied.

The two sides conducted a review of bilateral relations and their developments. The president welcomed developing cooperation with France for the benefit of the two sides.

French Minister Holds News Conference, Departs Syria

JN1801212596 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1915 GMT 18 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' and French Foreign Minister Herve de Charette held a news conference this evening attended by correspondents of Arab and foreign new agencies in Damascus and the media delegation accompanying De Charette.

At the outset of the news conference, al-Shar' welcomed French Foreign Minister Herve de Charette and said that his visit to our country acquires special importance at this stage. Al-Shar' added that de Charette held an important meeting with President Hafiz al-Asad, during which the two sides reviewed the situation in the region, headed by the peace process and its prospects. They also discussed what is expected of the upcoming talks due to be held in Maryland on 24 January. Al-Shar' noted: Discussion also dealt with a French role in the peace process. Naturally, he added, this would lead to a European role in the peace process and in the future of the region. Talks also tackled a wide range of issues of common interest. The foreign minister: In short, I can say that the meeting was good and was held in a cordial atmosphere. During this meeting, the two sides stressed the importance of Syrian-French relations as well as relations between Syria and the European Union, in which France is playing an important role.

De Charette then spoke. He thanked the foreign minister for inviting him to visit Syria. He said: I must express my appreciation for his excellency the president's meeting with us. Moreover, my talks with Mr. al-Shar' were useful, fruitful, and cordial.

French Foreign Minister Herve de Charette and his wife left Damascus this evening after a 2-day visit to Syria, during which he met with President Hafiz al-Asad.

He was seen off at Damascus international Airport by Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' and his wife, senior Foreign Ministry officials, French Ambassador in Damascus Jean-Claude Cousseran, and the Embassy staff.

More on France's de Charette News Conference in Damascus

JN1801224696 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 2115 GMT 18 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' and French Foreign Minister Herve de Charette held a news conference this evening attended by correspondents of Arab and foreign news agencies in Damascus and the media delegation accompanying De Charette.

At the outset of the news conference, al-Shar' welcomed French Foreign Minister Herve de Charette and said that his visit to our country acquires special importance at this stage. [passage omitted]

De Charette then spoke and thanked the foreign minister for inviting him to visit Syria, expressing his happiness

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at his meeting with His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad. He said: I must express my appreciation for his excellency the president's meeting with us. Moreover, my talks with Mr. al-Shar' were useful, fruitful, and cordial.

The French foreign minister said: This visit falls within the framework of developing bilateral relations. Since the election of France's new president, contacts with Syria have intensified and on many occasions I had the opportunity to meet with al-Shar'. Also, Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam visited Paris at the invitation of the French prime minister, and I am today here in Damascus. Therefore, all these occasions give us an opportunity to express both countries' mutual interest to clearly reinforce our mutual relations.

The French minister added: During our talks, we dealt with many issues. We conveyed to the Syrian leadership France's interest in developing and expanding the political dialogue which allows us to deal with a set of issues of mutual interest and to exchange and share analyses on the situation in the region. Also, the political dialogue gives us the opportunity to analyze together the viewpoints vis-a-vis developments in the peace process. We also dealt with other issues.

Noting the importance of the Syrian role in rendering the Barcelona conference a success, De Charette said: We discussed the importance of this march which we began in Barcelona and which was considered new by the Mediterranean littoral states. The march aims at discussing common security and development, as well as cultural work among civilizations which share many factors.

Asked about the French move toward the region at this time, the French foreign minister said: We should believe that when President Chirac was elected France decided to adopt a more active policy in the Mediterranean area, the Middle East, Near East, and the Arab world. He added: We are doing this for two reasons. First, because we harbor amity toward the people in this region, whom we have known for a long time and whom we believe we understand; and [second], because we are in a decisive stage which came when matters were not moving in a balanced way. Today, however, things are moving on all political, cultural, and economic levels in a different way than in the past.

Answering a question on Syrian-French relations, de Charette said: I would like to clarify some factors. France is concerned about Lebanon's territorial integrity. This, of course, requires the full implementation of all of Security Council Resolution 425. France is also concerned about Lebanon's sovereignty. I noticed, through the talks with the Syrian officials, that the stands of Syria and Lebanon are very close.

Asked whether President Jacques Chirac will come to Syria, de Charette said: You know the concern President Chirac gives to this region and the importance he attaches to Syria in terms of France's policy vis-a-vis the region. Nobody can cast doubt about President Chirac's concern for this country, Syria. This concern is really very great.

Asked if he expects an imminent breakthrough in the Maryland peace talks in the next few months, Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' said: The first round of the Maryland talks aimed at exploring and testing the intention of each party. He added: Syria seeks a just and comprehensive peace based on international legitimacy, the Security Council resolutions, and the principle of land for peace. This peace, he added, should lead to a full withdrawal from the Golan to the 4 June 1967 border and from southern Lebanon, noting that security arrangements must be equal [mutasawi] and parallel [mutawazi] in which the security of each party should not be at the expense of the other.

Al-Shar' said that the talks have failed over the past six months because of Israel's violation of the principles and objectives of the security arrangements, foremost of which is the fact that the security of one party should not be realized at the expense of the other party, and that the security arrangements should not harm the sovereignty of any party.

The foreign minister also said that Syria is serious about and committed to achieving just and comprehensive peace and that if the other party is also serious, the coming months will witness tangible progress in the peace process.

Asked if the last round of talks between Syria and Israel in Maryland tackled a draft declaration of principles, al-Shar' said: No declaration of principles was discussed. In our view, such formulas will waste time. Syria informed U.S. Secretary of State Christopher that it prefers to achieve a peace agreement instead of seeking other formulas.

Asked on France's assessment of the latest U.S. decision to boycott companies dealing with the Islamic Republic of Iran, de Charette said: I can answer this question although it is not a topical issue of interest to our bilateral relations. France's position toward Iran has not changed. We are implementing adopted resolutions, and we want Iran to return to the international community as a full member. He also stressed the importance of Syrian-French relations, and said: Our relations are characterized by cordiality, fairness, and understanding,

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and be assured that we are working in a very positive spirit with Syria. I repeat that we maintain mutual cordial relations with it and share mutual confidence. This is important to the French-Syrian political dialogue and it requires us to stretch our hands to each other and meet each other's demands. We attach great importance to this issue.

Regarding economic relations between the two countries, the French minister said: We are working to promote economic relations between the two countries. There are projects from both parties, and many French companies are operating in Syria. We attach every importance to these relations. Yesterday, I met with representatives of some of these companies, and I sensed their interest in economic cooperation. We are also interested in economic exchange between the two countries and we know that Syrian-French economic exchange will strengthen Syrian-French relations, which I have referred to on all levels.

Replying to a question, al-Shar' said: The nature of relations between Syria and Lebanon is determined by the Lebanese and Syrian people and the sacrifices that Syria has offered to preserve Lebanon's land, people, and institutions reflect the profound relations between the two fraternal countries, as well as the deep historical ties among the people in the two countries. I believe that the great sacrifices offered to Lebanon cannot not be offered by any country to another country if these countries do not maintain deep historical ties similar to those linking Syria and Lebanon.

The French foreign minister concluded the news conference by saying: I am very happy to visit Syria. France is extremely interested in Syrian-French relations. This visit came after Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam's visit to Paris in order to promote bilateral relations and to show confidence between the two countries.

Herve de Charette and his wife left Damascus this evening. They were seen off at Damascus International Airport by Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' and his wife, senior Foreign Ministry officials, and French Ambassador in Damascus Jean-Claude Cousseran and Embassy staff.

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Afghanistan

Afghan Foreign Ministry Sends Note to Pakistan's Foreign Ministry

LD1801193096 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 18 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Afghan Foreign Ministry has sent the following note, containing a statement by the ministry's spokesman, to Pakistan's Foreign Ministry:

Statement by the spokesman of the Afghan Foreign Ministry:

According to international news agencies, the government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan has recently sent a delegation, consisting of officials from various organizations, over land to Turkmenistan via Kandahar and Herat Provinces of Afghanistan. The Pakistan Government has also decided to start work on a communications network and to open a branch of Pakistan's national bank in these provinces.

As it is quite clear to Pakistan's Government that the dispatch of convoys to another country via the territory of an independent country with prior consent of its central government is one of the accepted principles of international law. [Words indistinct] the recent action of Pakistan openly contradicts this principle and is a blatant violation of Afghanistan's national security, independence, and territorial integrity. It is also not acceptable by any laws or principles of Islamic brotherhood and good neighborly relations.

In keeping with its principled stance, the Islamic State of Afghanistan is interested in resolving differences on the basis of the principles of equal rights and through bilateral talks and reciprocal understandings. Afghanistan regards every action taken on issues of bilateral relations, without the central government's consent, as direct and open interference in its internal affairs, and will regard it as an illegal action. The Afghan Foreign Ministry asks the authorities of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to end its hostility to the Afghans and to refrain from such actions as would bring about nothing except a deterioration of bilateral relations.

UN's Mestiri Visits Afghanistan, Returns to Pakistan

LD1801202996 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0730 GMT 18 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Mahmud Mestiri, special envoy of the UN secretary general, visited Jalalabad 17 January.

Reports received by Radio Message of Freedom say that Mahmud Mestiri, after talks with Pakistani authorities on Afghanistan's current situation, visited Jalalabad city yesterday. The report adds that in Jalalabad Mestiri held talks with Haji Abdol Qadir, chairman of the Eastern Provinces' Jihadi Shura [council] and members of this shura on current issues in Afghanistan.

According to another report, Mestiri, after his visit to Jalalabad, returned to Islamabad yesterday evening.

Afghanistan's Rabbani to UN's Mestiri: Foreign Intervention Must Stop

LD1801195396 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 18 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The presidency's press office of the Islamic State of Afghanistan informed BAKHTAR that esteemed President Prof. Borhanoddin Rabbani met His Excellency Mahmud Mestiri, special envoy of the UN secretary general, this afternoon.

At this meeting Mahmud Mestiri first briefed the president on his efforts to find a solution to the situation in Afghanistan and expressed (?appreciation) for Afghanistan's new initiatives to resolve the problem. In appreciating the efforts made by Mahmud Mestiri to find a peaceful solution to the situation in Afghanistan, the president added: The only way to achieve a satisfactory and speedy solution to Afghanistan's problems is to end foreign interference in the internal affairs of our country. We hope that the international society will take effective action in regard to the cessation of foreign interventions.

Afghanistan's Hekmatyar Calls For Formation of Opposition Alliance

LD1801192396 Tehran IRNA in English 1455 GMT 18 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad, Jan. 18, IRNA — Chief of Hezb-e-Eslami [Islamic Party] of Afghanistan Golboddin Hekmatyar, one of the arch rivals of President Borhanoddin Rabbani, Thursday called for the formation of a grand opposition alliance against the Kabul administration.

Addressing a press conference in Pakistani northern town of Peshawar, he confirmed that Supreme coordination Council, the main opposition alliance, is engaged in talks with Taleban student militia but have not yet arrived at any agreement.

The four party Supreme Coordination Council groups Hekmatyar's own Hezb-e-Eslami, Northern National Islamic Movement led by General Abdor Rashid Dostam, Afghan National Front of Former President Sibghatollh

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Mojadeddi and Hezb-e-Wahdat [Islamic Unity Party] faction headed by Karim Khalili.

Hekmatyar accused Russia and India of interfering in the internal affairs of his country by backing his sworn enemy Rabbani.

He reiterated his proposal for the establishment of a mutually acceptable interim government, holding of general elections and transfer of power to elected representatives.

Answering a question, he sounded pessimistic about UN efforts to bring rapprochement among the warring factions.

He spoke sarcastically of United Nations special envoy Mahmud Mestiri and urges him to give up his peace mission because "it is engough (for him)".

Afghanistan: Taleban Fires 14 Rockets on Kabul Overnight

LD1801193696 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 18 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Taleban group fired 14 rockets on residential areas of Kabul city last night.

A BAKHTAR correspondent reported that these rockets, which were fired from the south, wounded one person and destroyed four residential buildings.

Afghanistan: 5 Bodies Found in Area Under Taleban Control

LD1801210096 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 18 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The dead bodies of five youths who had been abducted by the Taleban group were found two days ago in Charasyab District [15 km east of Kabul].

Quoting eyewitnesses, BAKHTAR reports that two months ago the mercenary Taleban group had abducted a number of teenage youths from Reshkhor and Golbagh areas [in the vicinity of Charasyab] and then martyred them in Charasyab. The bodies of the five youths were found in an area [words indistinct] of Charasyab. At a condolence ceremony held yesterday, (?the relatives) expressed their hatred and repulsion for the Taleban group and denounced their actions.

Earlier reports also indicated that the Taleban group in areas under their control were executing such evil deeds as abduction, beatings, and theft. These have increased the hatred of the people toward this group.

Bangladesh

Bangladesh Police Clash With Opposition Activists in Dhaka

BK1801152996 Hong Kong AFP in English 1332 GMT 18 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Dhaka, Jan 18 (AFP) — Thousands of policemen Thursday clashed with opposition activists who tried to march to the election commission office in Dhaka protesting what they called "one-party" general elections in February.

An estimated 50 people were injured when clashes erupted after activists, including women leaders of the main opposition Awami League, tried to break through barbed wire barricades at Farmgate area, two kilometers (just over one mile) away from the commission.

Police fired tear gas and coloured hot water to disperse the stone-throwing activists. Activists also hurled home-made bombs and damaged parked vehicles.

"Nobody will go to the vote centre and these one-party elections cannot take place," main opposition leader Sheikh Hasina Wajed, chief of the Awami League, told several thousand supporters from a truck at Panthapath area.

She said the opposition wanted to establish peoples' right to vote freely.

Wajed appealed to all, including the army and government officials, not to cooperate in the "farcical" elections and thanked all those political parties which boycotted the event.

Panic-gripped Dhaka residents tried to reach their destinations through barricaded streets covering a wide area in central Dhaka as police diverted traffic from roads leading to the commission office causing jams.

Fearing "breaches of peace" the Dhaka Metropolitan Police had imposed a ban on rallies or demonstrations on all roads to and around the commission complex from noon to midnight Thursday.

The opposition action came amid renewed efforts in its 21-month campaign to oust Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and her ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP).

The Awami League-led opposition have been campaigning to force Zia's resignation and elections under a neutral caretaker government.

Efforts to break the lengthy stalemate, which started in March 1994 when BNP candidates won two controversial by-elections, ended in failure Wednesday, after nominations for election candidates closed without the

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participation of Awami League or other major groups, who have threatened to disrupt the polls.

The BNP declared it would go ahead with elections for the 300-seat parliament February 15, and said all paths to a negotiated settlement with the Awami League had closed.

Meanwhile, the election commission announced that 1,987 candidates from the BNP and nine other minor parties have filed nomination papers to contest from the 300 seats.

Bangladeshi Opposition's Insistence on Written Proposals Criticized

BK1901113396 Dhaka THE MORNING SUN in English 18 Jan 96 p 4

[Editorial: "Written proposals"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The government and the opposition seem to be getting further and further away from the agreement on the current political standoff. Both sides are sticking to their guns without budging from their respective positions.

They have agreed on the formation of an Advisory Council to run the day-to-day administration following resignation of the present BNP [Bangladesh Nationalist Party] government. They have also concurred on the composition of the Advisory Council. It will consist of representatives from both sides. But the main snag preventing the agreement is the appointment of the Chief of the Council. The government insists the President with all the executive power of the state must head the Advisory Council, while the opposition is of the opinion that it should be headed by a Chief Advisor who will be a neutral person. Such a person should be vested [with] all executive power of the state. The opposition is against giving executive power to the president because he happens to be a member of BNP. But the government seems unwilling to relent on this score.

The obstinate attitude of the ruling and opposition parties negates the concept of democracy. They should not fiddle with the sentiments of the innocent people. People want political stability for the unhindered growth of our fragile economy. Political parties should not waste the new year in wranglings and desist from vitiating the development tempo. What are the political parties doing — both the ruling and the mainstream opposition? They are definitely drifting the country towards confrontation of the worst type. They should remember that in 1995, 52 days were weekly holiday (Friday), 20 days government holiday, 38 days hartal [strike] and 10 days were wasted on rail and road blockades. In total 120 days of the year proved unproductive for the country. There is no time in hand to waste.

The two sides had series of meetings to discuss all aspects of the matter and to consider various options without being able to achieve conclusive result. Judged from this perspective the opposition demand for written proposal spelling out in detail the government's offer to resolve the current constitutional tangle seems absolutely meaningless.

The Secretary General of the ruling BNP, Abdus Salam Talukdar, has rightly questioned the use of a written proposal on a subject which has been discussed exhaustively at various levels during the past 18 months. How does it materially change the position unless there is a change of heart? It can at best be reiteration of their respective positions in black and white. Mr Salam Talukdar has, however, indicated that the written proposal or proposals can be of use if the two sides agree to sit across the table and discuss in a bid to reach and acceptable solution. For that both sides will have to be tolerant and accommodative of each other's point of view.

In other words, there must be a genuine desire on both sides to break the deadlock and reach a settlement on the basis of give and take. Harping on their respective stands will lead them nowhere. To sum up, the exchange of written proposals or endless deliberations on the same subject will be of no avail. It would be a sheer waste of time.

Bangladesh Daily Urges Emulating U.S. To Save Democracy

BK1901105296 Dhaka THE MORNING SUN in English 17 Jan 96 p 4

[Editorial: "Backstage parley?"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] With no headway in sight towards breaking the political deadlock, rumour is bruited about that US ambassador David N. Merrill, a great wellwisher of Bangladesh and concerned at the fast sliding of the prospect of political reconciliation down the lane of intransigence to a point of no return, has held separate meetings with the representatives of the ruling party and the mainstream opposition.

The US being the citadel of democracy and Bangladesh being the fledgling nation with nascent democracy, the diplomatic osmosis between the peoples of these two nations is bound to bring forth some wholesome result directed towards resolving the current crisis which is so much inimical to the centrifugal forces of democratic setup. There is, however, a big if; and that is if, and only if, the two political poles in the nation's political ambit condescend to paying heed to the suggestions with open

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mind, disencumbered of partisan feelings and autocratic stance behind a facade of democratic stunt, with the great hearts of a Truman not caring for another term or a Roosevelt enjoying the confidence for a third term or of a Nixon stepping down and Clinton eulogizing him for great counsel.

Look at how America now stands, after more than two centuries of ups and downs, having diverged from the yoke of monarchy. There were also time-to-time scuffles and acrimonious stands, but when it came to democracy there was no dearth of sacrifice. They made it. Yes, with their friendly boost of morale, we may as well hope we can make it.

India

Indian President Accused of Receiving Money in Corruption Scandal

BK1801161096 Hong Kong AFP in English 1522 GMT 18 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] New Delhi, Jan 18 (AFP) — India's opposition leader Thursday [18 January] launched a counter-offensive in the country's most sweeping corruption scandal, alleging Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao had received money improperly.

The charge was immediately denied by the premier's ruling Congress (I) party.

"There is no substance in that", said party spokesman Vittal Gadgil.

Atal Behari Vajpayee, leader of the opposition in the lower house of the parliament, made the comments at a news conference in the northern Indian state of Uttar Pradesh.

He said the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) had recorded a statement by one of the Jain brothers involved in the scandal, alleging that 30 million rupees (857,142 dollars) had been paid to Rao.

There was no immediate comment on the opposition leader's statement from the CBI.

Meanwhile, the chief minister of the capital state of New Delhi offered to resign Thursday after he was named in the multi-million-dollar corruption scandal.

A Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) spokesman said Madan Lal Khurana has offered to resign in a letter to party chief, Lal Krishna Advani. It was unclear whether Advani had accepted the resignation or not.

Khurana is accused of having taken 300,000 rupees (8,571 dollars) from a New Delhi businessman.

The scandal has been simmering since the 1991 seizure of a coded diary of a New Delhi businessman that showed he paid more than 20 million dollars to politicians and bureaucrats from April 1988 to March 1991 to win contracts.

On Tuesday, the CBI accused seven opposition leaders, including Advani, president of the BJP and three ministers of taking bribes from the tycoon.

Vajpayee, who belongs to the BJP, accused the Congress party of maligning and tarnishing the image of his party, saying his own group had "emerged as its main challenger" in the runup to general elections.

"There is an ugly attempt to tarnish party's (BJP) image by involving Advani," Vajpayee said.

"The charges are not substantiated that Advani has received money from Jain brothers. He has set new standards in the Indian public life and thrown a moral challenge to others," he said.

"In fact there are several more ministers, leaders of political parties and two governors whose name figures in the list. All of them should resign," Vajpayee said.

The three cabinet ministers named by the CBI — Agriculture Minister Balram Jakhar, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Vidya Charan Shukla and Human Resources Development Minister Madhavrao Scindi — all tendered their resignations late Wednesday.

Congress sources said the ministers were visibly unhappy over being accused of bribe-taking by the CBI despite their denials of involvement.

Meanwhile, a senior centrist Janata Dal party leader, Sharad Yadav, whose name also figures in the CBI's list admitted that he had taken 300,000 rupees from a businessman.

"I did accept 300,000 rupees as a donation for the party in November 1989," Yadav told reporters in New Delhi.

"I assure full cooperation in the probe and will accept any punishment if found guilty of corruption," he said.

Yadav said he did not know the Delhi businessman personally "but will be able to identify him if paraded before me."

The scandal, which has embroiled all major political parties except the communists, spawned calls for probity in politics as an election-eve power struggle appeared to be brewing in the ruling party over the political bombshell.

Industrialists said it was time to end the growing criminalisation of Indian politics.

"The whole imbroglio underlines the importance of poll reforms, especially political donations," said the

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Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry, which groups leading business houses.

Indian Minister on Purpose of Nation's Nuclear Program

BK1901034796 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 19 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The external affairs minister, Mr. Pranab Mukherjee, has said that India's nuclear program is for peaceful purposes only. In an interview to PTI over the phone from Bangkok, he said that reports suggesting other use of nuclear program are meant to attack India on nonexisting issues. Referring to Pakistan, Mr. Mukherjee said New Delhi is aware that Islamabad had clandestinely obtained nuclear explosive capability.

Indian BJP Official Denies Division in Party Over Advani

BK1901012496 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 18 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The chief minister of the national union territory of Delhi, Mr. Madan Lal Khurana, has offered to resign. In a letter to the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] president, Mr. L.K. Advani, he said he wanted to quit to join the party's fight against corruption in public life. Mr. Khurana denied having taken any money from Jain brothers and said that reports in this regard are baseless and malicious. However, according to the party spokesperson, Mrs. Sushma Swaraj, the offer has been turned down. Briefing newspersons in New Delhi today, she said the party demanded that the CBI [Central Bureau of Investigation] should submit all the case papers in the hawala [illegal money transfer] case to the court. Mrs. Swaraj expressed apprehension that those in the authority may destroy evidence to conceal their involvement. She denied reports there is any division in the BJP over the resignation of Mr. Advani from the Lok Sabha.

Replying to queries from newsmen, the Congress-I spokesman, Mr. V.N. Gadgil, said that it is for the investigation agency to decide who should be charge-sheeted.

The Janata Dal leader, Mr. Sharad Yadav, has welcomed the investigation into the hawala case and said it will strengthen the forces fighting against corruption. He was talking to newspersons in New Delhi.

The Haryana chief minister has denied receiving money from the prime accused in the hawala case. Addressing a press conference in New Delhi today, Mr. Bhajan Lal said that he never met him. Mr. Bhajan Lal's name allegedly figures in the diaries seized from S.K. Jain by the CBI.

Article Predicts Multiparty Government in India

BK1901085096 Calcutta ANANDABAZAR PATRIKA in Bengali 9 Jan 96 p 4

[Article by Suman Chattopadhyay]

[FBIS Translated Text] The election is around the corner. If the hint given by Prime Minister Narasimha Rao during his recent visit to Madhya Pradesh is true, then the general election in the country for the 11th Lok Sabha will be held in April; that is only three months away.

Elections in this politics-oriented country are synonymous with tension. Elections means speculation by political pundits. Quite naturally, politicians and pundits have already begun speculating on the shape of the 11th Lok Sabha—that is, which party will win how many seats. These speculations will no doubt reach a higher pitch once these pundits become thoroughly involved in the game.

What is noteworthy in these speculations, however, is that there is already a general consensus on an important point. It is that, as was the case with the 10th Lok Sabha, the 11th Lok Sabha will also be hung. In other words, in the Lok Sabha — which has total of 524 [figure as published] seats, out of which an election will most probably not be held for the six Jammu and Kashmir seats — no single party or alliance will be able to secure the required majority to independently form a government. Therefore, speculation before the election is mainly over which party or alliance will win the maximum number of seats in a generally three-way fight between the Congress, Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP], or the left parties- National Front alliance.

One of the essential elements necessary to secure a single party or alliance majority in the Lok Sabha election is massive popular support throughout a wide area of the country; however, none of the three major contestants enjoy this support at the moment. Theoretically, it is the Congress that is still the only political party that exists in the entire country, probably in all villages; however, that is all. Given the Congress's loss of popularity in the northern belt and western India, the significance of the party's presence in these regions today is only symbolic.

The Congress was almost wiped out long ago in the two most important northern states of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, which elect one-third of the total Lok Sabha members. There is no reason to think that any dramatic change will take place in the situation during the upcoming elections. The situation in western India at the moment is also worrisome for the Congress. After Gujarat, the party also lost Maharashtra during the last

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state assembly elections. Though slightly better, the Congress is not at all in a comfortable situation, even in the four states south of the Vindhya Range.

The fact that the Congress faces a disaster in Tamil Nadu if it does not forge an alliance with Jayalalitha's All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam has been repeatedly proven during past elections. It is not yet clear, however, whether Narasimha Rao will eventually forge an alliance with Jayalalitha. On the other hand, the Congress is facing the worst situation in Kerala following the collapse of its alliance with the Muslim League in that state. The party was also pushed ino third place in the assembly elections held in Karnataka a few months ago. The big question now is how far it will succeed in recovering the ground lost there.

Despite the Telugu Desam's uncertainty in the prime minister's own state of Andhra Pradesh, the prime minister is himself probably worried about the Congress's popularity. Given this situation, it is easy, therefore, to predict even now that whatever the number of seats the Congress manages to win in various states throughout the country in the coming elections, it will fall far short of a majority.

The BJP leaders' claim that their party has emerged as an alternative to the Congress does not reflect reality. It is true that the BJP is an alternative to the Congress in the Hindi-belt's Uttar Pradesh and in western India's Maharashtra. The BJP, however, does not yet have the countrywide organizational setup or popularity necessary to gain a single-party majority in the Lok Sabha elections. Except for some areas of southern Bihar, the BJP's existence in the country's eastern and northeastern region, including West Bengal and Orissa, is virtually nominal.

The picture is same in south India as well. Except for Karnataka, the BJP, as in the past, still lacks the support of the electorate in the three southern states. In 1989 and 1991, the BJP attempted to create a wave of Hindu revivalism, while keeping the structure of the Babri Mosque intact, and it could succeed remarkably in that attempt. Now, however, they do not have that opportunity. Viewed from this angle, the upcoming election minus the advantage of campaigning on religious grounds will test the BJP's true popularity. Judged by any criterion, that popularity will never be adequate for the party to assume federal power in Delhi.

The strength of the third force of left parties-National Front alliance, which is aspiring to emerge as an alternative to the Congress and BJP, is not adequate to form a government at the federal level either. There is no doubt that the leftists will be able to maintain their hold over their three traditional bastions of West Bengal, Kerala, and Tripura. It is unclear, however, as to what the final shape of the National Alliance will be and which parties will participate in it. Unlike the previous two elections, Vishwanath Pratap Singh, due primarily to his bad health, will not lead the alliance during this election and not stand for the prime minister's post. Based on past experience, the absence of a competent leader will further complicate the alliance's problems. Moreover, the alliance lacks an organization in vast areas of the country. Given this situation, it may be assumed that the left parties-National Front Alliance will also not receive the required majority.

There is no doubt, therefore, that the parliament will inevitably be a hung one. The only question is who or which parties will be in a position to form the government. It might be too early to speculate. What can be predicted at the moment, however, is that the coming elections might make it clear that the days of one-party rule is over. Similarly, the coming election might also give an indication as to how the process of transition to multiparty rule is going to culminate. There lies the significance and importance of this election.

It is only a natural and desired phenomenon if multiparty rule in established at the federal level in a multiparty democracy like India. It has not happened thus far due to various reasons. The Congress was the only established political party in the country until 1967; there was no alternative to it. It was during the 1967 elections that the situation of there being no alternative to the Congress received a jolt, which the party could not surmount during the period that followed. Despite this, the three elections held over the intervening period — in 1971, 1980 and 1984 — were won by the Congress, mainly due to the country's leader-oriented politics. In fact, almost all the general elections held in the country from 1971 to 1989 had the characteristics of a referendum. This means that all the issues were thrown onto the back burner, and the main question was whether or not the Congress leader should remain in power—a factor that served as a motivating force in those elections. This is why the multiparty character of Indian politics could not be reflected in those elections; however, it will be reflected now.

This is because this is the first time since independence that the Congress is not contesting the elections under the leadership of the Nehru-Indira family. It is going to contest the elections under the leadership of someone who evidently does not have any power to attract the people. The politics of directly establishing a personal bridge with the voters apart from the organizational structure of the party, as was introduced by Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi, is absent in this election.

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Second, there is no chance in this election for the voters to be swayed by emotions. The sympathy wave following the assassination of Indira Gandhi in the 1984 elections and the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi before the second round of elections in 1991 had benefited the Congress. Similarly, the anti-Indira and anti-Rajiv wave helped the opposition in 1977 and 1989. Neither the ruling party nor the opposition enjoys this opportunity now. The wave of communal feeling is now considerably subdued.

To be precise, the upcoming election will reflect a true picture of the real strength of each party. As no party will be able to secure enough seats to form a government on its own, the post-election scenario will lead to the forging of a new alignment of alliances and new thinking. The realization that a multiparty rule in Delhi is now a reality will open up new prospects and a completely new chapter in India's parliamentary politics.

Iran

Velayati Discusses Iran's Regional Policies

LD1801233196 Tehran IRIB Television Second Program Network in Persian 1954 GMT 18 Jan 96

[Interview with Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati by unidentified announcer; place not given; from the "Political Roundtable" program — live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Announcer] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful. Greetings and welcome dear compatriots and viewers of the weekly political program.

As you know, our country's foreign policy has gone through fresh changes in recent days. Trips by Foreign Ministry officials to regional and supraregional countries were evidence of this. For that reason, this week's program is about the priorities in our country's foreign policy. Our esteemed guest this week is His Excellency Dr. 'Ali Akbar Velayati, the foreign minister.

Doctor, thank you for coming on the program. With your permission, I will ask the first question. In connection with the priorities in our country's foreign policy, is our country's foreign policy based on regional or supraregional countries?

[Velayati] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful. Greetings to dear viewers. Our regional policy undoubtedly enjoys a higher priority than our supraregional policy. But that does not mean ignoring or attaching little value to our supraregional policy. [passage omitted]

[Announcer] Dr. Velayati, you have spoken about the importance of regional cooperation. However, it seems that certain countries of the region are not interested in the significance of regional cooperation, especially the countries of the southern Persian Gulf, our southern neighbors. For example, the declarations of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC]. What is your view on this?

[Velayati] We cannot say that the countries of the southern Persian Gulf are not interested in regional cooperation. They have regional cooperation among themselves within the GCC itself.

As regards Iran, some of these countries have taken part in a new initiative, which has a hopeful future — this being cooperation in the Indian Ocean. To date, we have had three meetings on this — in Mauritius, Australia, and India. We took part in two of these three meetings. Very soon the research department of the Foreign Ministry will organize a meeting on cooperation between the countries of the Indian Ocean. It shall invite all these countries [GCC members] to attend.

The other day, when I met the speaker of the Australian Senate, he told me that they would take part enthusiastically in our meeting. The Indians will definitely take part too. Australia; India; Indonesia; other countries of the South and Southeast Asia; important African countries, such as Kenya, Tanzania, and South Africa; and Arab countries of the Arab Peninsula; Iran; Pakistan ...[pauses] these are significant countries of the Indian Ocean. The Indian Ocean is a very important region, and we are at the early stages of regional cooperation here, which, of course, includes the Arab countries of the Persian Gulf. The active participation of some of these countries in the meetings that we take part in and in which we are the active nucleus will show their interest in regional cooperation.

[Announcer] Dr. Velayati, you have spoken about regional and supraregional cooperation and said the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran places significance on supraregional cooperation as well. It seems, however, certain countries — especially America — are not happy about this type of cooperation. The latest American plot is the economic embargo against Iran; it has asked its Western allies to join it in this endeavor. Does this show America fears the expansion of Iran's influence and its establishment of relations with countries in other regions?

[Velayati] The Americans rely on the Persian Gulf region more than others. They do not hide the fact that the national interests of America dictate that they should be here, whatever happens. They, however, speak these words with a reasonable tone, without being provocative. But to be blunt, the Americans want to have a base in every corner of this sensitive region.

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In one sentence, the Americans' interests override the interests of the countries of the region, as far as the Americans are concerned. They say oil is of strategic importance. Oil is of strategic importance to all the countries of the world! They are trying their utmost to keep the price of oil down, just as Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani has said: Oil is cheaper than water. [passage omitted]

So they want to be present in this region. If they were to be here, they would not want anyone opposing their presence. Only a strong country could oppose their presence and announce openly its opposition. Therefore, they do not want any Middle Eastern or Persian Gulf country to be strong or independent. It must either have close relations with America — and close means one-way relations, with the Americans issuing orders and the other side obeying — ...[pauses] if anyone, any country, resists this, they create problems for him. Since the Islamic Republic of Iran is leading the resistance, since it is a country with a great capacity and potential to be strong, since it has shown that it is strong — it stood up to the imposed [Iran-Iraq] war, defended its interests, continues to do so — and since it is marching in the region proudly, it is natural that the Americans don't like it.

This is why they are undertaking certain steps, and you spoke some of them. However, they are doing their work and we are doing ours. They want to defend their illegitimate interests in this region, and we are defending our legitimate rights. This tension, therefore, was to a great extent predictable.

The 17-year experience of the revolution has shown that when our people are determined, America and others cannot shake the people's resolve.

Today, we are determined to expand our political and economic cooperation with strong, as you call them, supraregional countries. Our relations with China, Russia, Japan, Southeast Asia, Germany, France, Italy, Spain, and other countries are good and are growing. However, expanding relations with these countries, considering the trouble the Americans are creating for us, is not an easy task.

What is the outcome of this situation? You can see that all things considered, despite the difficulties, we have been successful. Look, during the first five-year plan, these countries gave us billions of dollars in loans. And at the start of the second plan, they extended the period of repayment. This long-term, massive investment in Iran is indicative of their hopes for future relations with us. Russia, Japan, China, Germany, France, smaller countries, Italy, Spain, Austria, each of them took part actively in cooperating with Iran. And the Americans have not liked this.

[Announcer] Dr. Velayati, you mentioned America's failure. Experience also has shown that the Americans have always failed in their conspiracies. The Western allies of America did not cooperate with it either. What was the reason behind the failure of America's Western allies to cooperate with it?

[Velayati] The reason is that every country pursues it own interests. Of necessity, not all the interests of the Western countries coincide for one country to be able to determine the future relations of those other countries with other states such as Iran.

During the cold war, the European countries and Japan as well — bearing in mind their need for U.S. military support and the U.S. nuclear defense umbrella over them — per force gave concessions. But now that the cold war era has come to an end, no such need is felt. You have noticed that officials of various countries have declared their reasoned opposition to the U.S. request in various ways. [passage omitted]

[Announcer] As the last question, let me ask you what specific plans the Foreign Ministry has for expanding ties with supraregional states?

[Velayati] We cannot give preference to supraregional countries or the state of being a supraregional country; but we must distinguish between those countries that are situated away from our region. That means first priority belongs to our regional cooperation and our relations with our neighbors. In the next order of priority, there are countries outside our region that have common interests with us.

[Announcer] What are the priorities for supraregional states?

[Velayati] Of the countries outside our region, those that have a more extensive and deeper relations with us enjoy more priority, for instance China, Russia, Germany, and France. We have all-round relations with them: economic, political, international, scientific, and cultural; for exchanging technology; for banking and credit ties; and at other levels that in any case are under the main principles of relations between us and those countries. [passage omitted]

To sum up, if we want to specify the elements and factors in the priorities of our relations with supraregional countries, we must say — and this is its formula — that the more extensive our relations, the more encompassing and deeper our relations are with a country, the higher will be the priority of that country in our foreign relations.

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[Announcer] What plans do you have for expansion of ties with such countries?

[Velayati] Well, commensurate with the nature of our relations with any country, we have made specific plans for that country. For example, we have plans regarding China that will be different from those for France. [passage omitted]

There is sufficient motive and determination to extend our relations with those countries, and we view our relations with them as long term. We have made our plans. Our plans are prepared. Our embassies in those countries and the Foreign Ministry central departments that have been designated to a region in the world have drawn-up plans. Stages are gone through one after the other, and you see the results. For example, when China votes for Iran on the subject of human rights, it shows that in that international sector we have made plans regarding China and we have made progress to reach that objective.

The fact that peaceful nuclear cooperation between Iran and Russia is progressing despite U.S. opposition — and you see Russian experts busy completing the Iranian nuclear power station — is due to planning that has been undertaken and various obstacles that have been overcome. The political aspects of that cooperation relate to the Foreign Ministry and the technical ones to the Atomic Energy Organization. There was a time when America and our enemies used to put out propaganda saying Iran is beset by economic constraints because of its debts related to the first plan. Well, we made plans, and the Foreign Ministry and our embassies in various countries in the world played an axial role in negotiating the repayments of the loans put at our disposal by those countries. On average, a six-year repayment period has been allowed. [passage omitted]

Those loans have been spent on the reconstruction of the country; otherwise, we would not witness today so much progress in reconstruction, especially in infrastructural work. As I say, the foreign policy is in fact the backbone of foreign relations. That is, the Foreign Ministry is the instigator of foreign relations. [passage omitted]

[Announcer] Let me thank you and your colleagues in the Foreign Ministry. Thank you for your time.

Iranian Official Criticizes U.S., Comments on Elections

LD1901125696 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran Provincial Network in Persian 0750 GMT 19 Jan 96

[Second Friday prayers sermon by Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi, head of the judiciary in Tehran — live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] The [March Majles] elections have been spoken about recently. I should like to contribute to the debate. One aspect of my discussion concerns the people in general and the other concerns the organizers of the elections.

Concerning the people in general, it seems the duty of the people is very clear. The Majles is the main axle around which the wheels of the system of the Islamic Republic of Iran turn. In other words, all the branches, the administration of the country is based on the laws approved by the Majles — the executive branch, the judicial branch, and all the organizations affiliated to them administer the country based on these laws. Therefore, the Majles is at the position of being the axle around which the wheels of this system and this country turn.

Well in that case, it is the natural right of the people to express their views on the administration of their country, it is their right to interfere in the administration of their country, it is their right to have a say in the running of their country. If someone says: I am not going to vote; what does this mean? What does it mean? It means I do not care about the next Majles, I do not care what laws it will pass, which direction it will take. I do not care about this issue. When he says I do not care, it means I do not care about my natural right. If anyone thinks or propagates this thought, it means trampling on a natural social right, it means interfering in the destiny of the country, it means interfering in the government's fate.

This is the right of the people. If you ignore this right, it means that tomorrow the same Majles will pass laws concerning your life. On that day, you will say: Why is the law like this or like that? Well, this comes back to yourself because you did not have a say in choosing the deputies. Why didn't you come along and vote? Why didn't you choose your own candidates who would administer the governing system in accordance with your wishes? Therefore, when we say taking part in elections and voting is a religious, sensible [aqli], social, and legal duty, it means this concerns the rights of society as a whole. Not paying attention to this right is very detrimental, just as paying attention to this right

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and taking full advantage of this right will, naturally, lead to a more sound, healthy, and correct system.

Just as you have the right to vote for who you like, you have the right to stand as candidates yourselves. Go, tell the people: I am ready, I want to represent you in the Majles. I call on all those who accept me to vote for me. This is your right and no-one has taken this right away, this is your natural right.

You can stand as an independent and announce: I want to represent the people. If you get the votes, what is wrong with that? If you do not get the votes, it naturally means the people prefer someone else to you. But this does not take away the right to stand. So, it is your natural right to stand and to introduce candidates. You can do this.

I say here that for the reason I have mentioned, there are no obstacles or restrictions for any of us to participate in the elections, to vote, to become candidates, and to nominate candidates. The atmosphere is totally open, free, and healthy, to which I will refer when talking about its organizers. That concerns the people as a whole.

However, concerning the authorities, a section is directly responsible for organizing the elections, that is the Interior Ministry. [passage omitted]

The second point is about the [election] overseers and the question of supervision. The honorable Guardian Council, under the law, supervises all the stages of the elections. From beginning to end it carries out its lawful duty. What I would like to clarify and add is that 12 persons — six esteemed clerics and six jurists selected by the Majles, who have the right to oversee all the country's approved laws and point out any religious or constitutional flaws — have been given the right to determine the eligibility or otherwise of candidates, but this has been questioned. It means they are trusted by the Majles, they are trusted by the leader [Khamene'i], they control all the laws of the land, but this and that is said when it comes to their determining the eligibility or otherwise of people. That is the law, and it has been clarified.

I state clearly that the political atmosphere in the country is open, free, sure, and without any unlawful restrictions, and that all individuals, groups, and political parties have the right to vote, to become candidates. In that respect full cooperation should be afforded. [Crowd chants "God is great," "Khamene'i is the leader," death to names indistinct]

America has allocated a budget to the task of confronting the Islamic Republic of Iran. We have all heard about this and we are also aware of all the opposition shown to this decision. Opposition to this move was shown in many places. A number of parliaments and their deputies, as well as many officials in different countries opposed this. There were some individuals whose opposition was totally unexpected by America; for instance officials in European countries or in the joint U.S.-European chamber of commerce.

Political experts know what it means when officials, say in France or in the said chamber of commerce and even certain personalities in America itself, come forward and state that America's move is a foreign policy mistake for Mr. Clinton and a violation of international laws.

The situation in fact got so bad that America officially instructed all its diplomats across the world to refrain from expressing any opinion about this issue. This was because they knew that any comment would just worsen the situation.

We really do not know when American leaders are going to begin to think more clearly. We do not know when they will wake and start analyzing the issues properly.

In this same connection, the U.S. Defense Secretary was recently speaking about the military presence in the Persian Gulf and we are not sure whether he was aware of the real meaning and the consequences of what he was saying.

He said: Our presence here is for the purpose of defending our interests and it is these interests that dictate our presence here. The question is what are your interests here? Is it not true that you used to say that you were here in order to safeguard the security of the region? One must say that it is only now that you are starting to reveal your real aim.

Is the Arabistan [Saudi] oil part of your interests here? Is it not also in your interest to create disputes between Arab states and induce fear among them so that you can sell them arms? Are these not your interests?

One must clearly state once again that the days are over when you were able to adopt these superpower postures and say we have to be present here because our interests say so. This is the mentality of a bully. [crowd chants: "Death to America"]

They [U.S. officials] say they are here for the sake of their own interests whereas their previous reason was to safeguard security.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has repeatedly declared that the security of the region is the responsibility of the regional countries. Countries bordering the Persian Gulf, whose natural security lies here must be in charge

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of regional security. Why should a power come here from the other side of the world and claim that it wants to preserve security? The region's security is the affair of the regional states.

The next issue concerns the Arab states, among whom the Americans have created disputes and a sense of fear in order to sell them arms. We hear about these arms contracts every day. It is really surprising that Arabistan now has a budget deficit. One must remember that we are talking about the same country, which in the old days never suffered from budget deficits and in fact always had a surplus due to its high oil exports of around 8 million barrels per day. This [deficit] is because of all the arms that they are forced to purchase, and the fact that they are told that if they do not buy these, then this or that consequence will await them.

A question arises at this point. Should one fear anyone in the region or should one fear America or Israel? After all, Israel has confessed to the world that it possesses weapons of mass destruction. At the same time it has never complied with any of the UN resolutions, and as an aggressive and usurper regime it has never shown any regard for anyone in the world. Should one fear Israel or the countries of the region?

The Islamic Republic of Iran has repeatedly announced its position on this issue. We have never given ourselves the right to interfere in the affairs of any other country. We have told all countries of the world, even America or other states as powerful as America, that we have no intention of interfering in their affairs, while at the same time we will not tolerate even the smallest act of interference in our affairs. [crowd chants "Allah-o-Akbar"]

We are waiting...[crowd interrupts] Please let me continue, we do not have much time left; we are waiting for midday [to begin the prayers], I have to be brief.

In his recent trip, Mr. Christopher — he has been here a few times, but after his recent visit and after visiting Syria, his first comments were that Syria continued to remain on the list of terrorist countries. What you [Christopher] are saying is that if Syria surrendered to you blindly, you who have come to the region a few times as a broker and mediator and drawn up a new plan every time, if Syria surrendered to your wishes, if it forgot its territories, if it turned a blind eye to the crimes and oppression of Israel, if it forgot its rights, which have been trampled on and said: You are right; then it would no longer be on the list of terrorist countries.

But now that it has resisted and defended its rights, now that it has defended its rights to its territories, now that it does not obey your proposals for peace — which is a kind of oppression — blindly, it remains on the list of terrorist countries.

The world should be asked: America — which itself announces officially that it has approved a sum of $20 million to sabotage and attack the system of the Islamic Republic of Iran — should America not be heading the list of terrorist countries? Or Syria, which has not surrendered to you? It is a natural right of countries to defend their rights with the wisdom and knowledge of their leaders. What do you expect?

As regards Palestine and the martyrdom of the great martyr Ayyash, it has been shown that these martyrdoms strengthen the intifada.

We have talked about Afghanistan a great deal. The recent efforts of the Islamic Republic of Iran are worthy of praise. Our position has been to try to end the fratricidal war. You [Afghans] should sit together, talk to each other, and administer your country.

I will finish with this: We have seen the Serbs' moves many times. After this treaty, after they accepted this treaty, we saw their kidnappings, we saw them moving their arms illegally, we saw them breaching the treaty. Let me address the honorable court that is investigating Serb war crimes, let me say this to them: If you waste time and dilly-dally in your investigations, it means you are blocking the advancement of peace. It would be impossible to release the Serb war criminals just like that and then say: Peace will return to Bosnia, the problem is over. This court must try and convict those Serb war criminals. [passage omitted]

Iranian Minister Deplores U.S. Decision To Penalize Oil Firms

LD1801205296 Tehran IRNA in English 1521 GMT 18 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 18, IRNA — Iranian deputy foreign minister, Abbas Maleki in Manama on Thursday deplored the United States's irresponsible policy of penalizing international oil companies making investment in Iranian oil and gas industry.

Speaking in the fourth confernece on Middle East petroleum and gas Maleki said Iran has already showed its desire to cooperate with all international companies which are ready to share technology and help Iran develop its resources.

"In this respect competitive financial package has been considered in the recent projects offered by the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC). In addition to that we have indicated our desire to cooperate in any regional effort to develop energy resources in the Persian Gulf and the Caspian region."

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As it has been officially announced, our policy in the Caspian region is the development of natural resources with minimum cost and due regards to the environmental concerns. To this end, we have offered to provide our infrastructural facilities which are currently the most economical and suitable choice for export of oil and gas from the region.

Maleki said with respect to the development of oil and gas in the Persian Gulf, NIOC has invited all oil companies to discuss and evaluate projects based on their economic merits and competitive rate of returns. The intention is to extend every cooperation to ensure the development of Iranian oil and gas resources which is vital for the country's economic growth and important for the future of world supply of energy.

But, he said "we are facing a political challenge from some countries which are openly interfering in our internal affairs with no respect to the international law. They have gone so far as to openly allocate funds to undermine a sovereign state in contravention of all United Nations articles and conventions. While we consider these hostile acts very serious, we particularly view the recent efforts by the United States to pass legislation to penalize international oil companies for their investment in Iranian oil and gas development programmes.

Such irresponsible policies will undermine the long term development of future resources for the world in general and Iran in particular.

Maleki said that the irrational policies of the United States will undermine the well being and prosperity of over 100 million people living in the northern part of the Persian Gulf creating a hostility and tension which will not be conductive to the natural development of future resources and healthy business activities by the international companies.

As for Iran, he said, "this will be considered as an open attempt to undermine the development of our oil and gas industry upon which the well being of our future generations rely."

Maleki said, "we are determined to confront this threat and with the help of God we aill overcome all the obstacles on our way, but, it is the second alarming factor which I would like to bring to your attention in this conference where most international companies are present."

What is very alarming, is how day to day local policies in one country could undermine the long term future of the oil industry in this region and the world.

The international companies must determine to choose their investment decisions, whether in the Persian Gulf or the Caspian Sea, either on the basis of current political debate in Washington or on the long-term political gravities and associated economic realities.

The Iranian official said it seems that many politicians do not appreciate that if the long term oil and gas policies are adopted based on the party policies and without understanding the long term commercial realities of the oil and gas industry in general and the companies in particular, it will unfortunately lead to crisis in future.

Iranian deputy foreign minister said the era of confrontation between the energy companies and the governments have long past and they must now act as partners to ensure the most economic approach to the development of resources, stability in the markets and securing the necessary capital for their projects.

The long term interest of the energy companies and countries where they operate, lies in cooperation based on economic realities. the development of resources, supply of oil and it's price are economic and strategic issues that must not be mixed up with the day to day internal policy of any country, Maleki said.

It is very ironic that the country which has advocated free trade for decades and consider itself to be the champion of market economy is now imposing irrational trade barriers against its own companies and those of other countries in different parts of the world merely on political grounds.

Elsewhere in his statement, Maleki said, "we are presently witnessing the proposal on long term expensive transport routes for the Caspian oil due to the current political considerations. The consequent losses will be suffered by the governments and the oil companies operating there in future."

Maleki said, "I strongly believe that the international companies who have resisted such policies in the past must continue to oppose such pressures which undermine the long term profitable growth of the industry for short term political gains of different parties."

Iranian official said that the future of the oil industry will be in danger if they become entangled with local politics of any country and allow politics to dominate their economic planning.

Maleki said in the long run logic will prevail and as one eminent economist put it "where politics and economic objectives clash, it is the former not the latter which will ultimately fail."

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Iranian UN Envoy Rejects Allegations in U.S. Daily

LD1401130796 Tehran IRNA in English 1244 GMT 14 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] United Nations, Jan. 14, IRNA — Iranian representative office at the United Nations today rejected the allegations raised by the U.S. daily, NEW YORK TIMES on so-called threats posed by Iran to the Persian Gulf region as unfounded and illogical.

Issuing a statement, the press official of Iranian mission to the United Nations said that disseminating such baseless allegations by THE NEW YORK TIMES was aimed at paving the way for continued presence of the U.S. in the Persian Gulf, for sale of more American made arms to the regional countries and for continued outflow of oil from the region.

NEW YORK TIMES has claimed that following the transfer of power from King Fahd to Prince 'Abdallah in Saudi Arabia, the new Saudi Government has to continue its oil production at full capacity in order to confront what it called as Iranian threat and to meet its security spendings.

The statement said if the world powers allow the states in the Persian Gulf region to protect the security of the region by themselves, then the region would be safer than ever before.

It also voiced Iran's readiness to sign non-intervention pacts with its own neighbour states.

Iranian Radio: U.S.-Israeli Peace Plans Oppose Syrian Interests

LD1101230196 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 2055 GMT 11 Jan 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, who is in the Middle East in pursuit of the process of talks between Syria and the Zioni-st regime, has continued his efforts to bring the positions of Tel Aviv and Damascus authorities closer together in order to pave the way for the continuation of the compromise talks at higher levels and make possible a meeting between Hafiz al-Asad and Shim'on Peres in the long run.

So far, despite the passage of two weeks from the start of the Syria-Israel talks in Maryland in the United States, no tangible progress has been achieved and the talks are still at the level of representatives. That is when there is need for stages such as direct talks at senior level for concluding a real agreement, without the benefit of mediators. Recently Christopher said that the time for direct talks between Syria and Israel has arrived. On that basis, a 10-point plan proposed by the Zionist regime's premier, including a face-to-face meeting with the Syrian president which was rejected by Hafiz al-Asad.

After the representatives of the two sides from Maryland returned and submitted to their leaders their assessments of each other's positions, America, which is trying to force the leaders of Damascus and Tel Aviv to decide, has offered to deploy American forces in the Golan Heights in order to get over the main obstacle in the way of a compromise, namely the Golan Heights issue. It has also proposed to fly aerial warning systems over the Golan Heights to replace the Zionist regime's land-based warning stations as a solution to the dispute.

Although Washington statesmen believe that that plan can satisfy Damascus as well, bearing in mind the permanent bond between the U.S. strategic interests and objectives and those of the Zionist regime, Tel Aviv will not lose anything by this, whereas Syria will be forced to accept the threatening presence of foreign forces on its land for a long time to come.

Tehran Paper Says U.S. Launched 'War of Nerves' Against Iran

NC1901084696 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 10 Jan 96 p 2

[Editorial: "Thwart U.S. Threat With Self-Reliant Economy"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Over the past few months the White House has launched a war of nerves against the Islamic Republic of Iran through the declaration of a series of overt and covert plots against Iran.

In order to foil Washington's plots our policymakers should in the first instance try to understand the reasons behind the recent U.S. moves.

The war of nerves launched against Iran is, on the one hand, a result of competition between the Clinton administration and the U.S.-Congress, and, on the other hand, an attempt by Washington to test U.S. capabilities in confronting its economic rivals in the event of an international crisis.

Approaching an election, it has become customary for Democrats and the Republicans to resort to dirty politics in order to appease influential Zionist circles. For this election, the pivotal point is the Iran card.

The U.S. has tried to test the workability of its imperialistic policies vis-a-vis its economic rivals in the post-Cold War era. Iran, China and Cuba are among the victims of the rivalry which the U.S. has initiated.

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In order to undermine the independence of the European Union, Japan and other economic giants, Washington has declared that it would punish any country dealing with Iran.

The victimized countries, including Iran, should bear in mind that they cannot withstand U.S. pressure if they do not rely on their own material and human resources. Preparing for or a self-reliant economy [as published] is the best answer to any interference from any power.

No doubt, cordial relations with our trade partners can to some extent hinder U.S. plots, but it is not a full guarantee against foreign plots and conspiracies.

Our economists will be able to block foreign plots only if they hold fast to their stance and do not give in to pressure. If our economy remains dependent on oil, they will not be able to do so.

Our policymakers should remember that compromising our principles is not a safe solution to thwarting foreign plots. If we compromise one principle today, the enemy will come up with a new demand tomorrow. Soon we will have compromised all our basic principles.

Our policymakers should, therefore, prepare themselves for any eventuality, not by relying on foreign allies, but through the mobilization of domestic forces for building a self-reliant economy.

Iranian Commentary Views U.S. Warning to India Over Nuclear Tests

LD1801211096 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1530 GMT 18 Jan 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] According to the Indian PTI news agency on 17 January, the American officials have warned the Indian Government that in case India becomes involved in new nuclear tests some sanctions will be imposed on India by the United States. In this regard, the American ambassador to India has said that the U.S. Administration may be forced to revive the 1994 Glenn amendment. According to Glenn revision, the United States has been obliged to sever all its economic, military, credit aids, and banking loans to the countries that act against the U.S. desire. The amendment also calls on the U.S. representatives in the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the Asian Development Bank, as well as other international creditor agencies to vote against loan grants to India.

Bringing up such warning to India takes place in the aftermath of some rumors in the United States concerning India's preparedness for its second nuclear test. India performed its first successful nuclear test in 1974, and since then it has carried out no other tests of this kind. At present India has denied such rumors. However, the American officials have claimed they have reliable information concerning India's preparedness in the Rajasthan desert.

A study of the U.S. threat to sever aids to India and the U.S. request to India not to deploy (Pritway) missiles in the Indian Army brings us to the conclusion that the differences between the United States and India are much deeper than in the past. These differences of views have become more sensitive when the United States agreed to sell new arms to Pakistan. India's opposition to the sale of arms to Pakistan by the United States has apparently turned into a factor for exertion of pressure on India by the United States. But concern over the increasing arms race between India and Pakistan is a subject that both the United States and India refer to in order to justify their views.

It should be kept in mind, however, that the U.S. threats against India are a kind of interference in the internal affairs of India. No one can say that India does not intend to darken its ties with the United States and still prefer balance in its foreign policy. Thus increasing attention of the United States on Pakistan, proved by naval maneuvers in the Oman Sea near the Indian waters, is under careful study in India and may well encourage India to draw up policies that will guarantee national interests that contradict U.S. views.

Iranian Paper: U.S. 'After Own Interests' in Iraqi Kurdistan

NC1201084796 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 4 Jan 96 p 2

[Editorial: "U.S., Not a Friend of Kurds"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] An Iranian delegation headed by 'Ali Aqa Mohammadi is currently visiting Iraqi Kurdistan. The delegation has received an unprecedented welcome by the Iraqi Kurds. The warm welcome indicates that Islamic Iran's influence on the people in the region is a natural one. As a mediator, Iran's role is far more beneficial to people of the region than that of an extra-regional power.

While Iran is trying to mediate between different Iraqi Kurds to stop the fratricidal war, it should not be forgotten that Iran has always laid emphasis on the territorial integrity of Iraq.

Ironically, U.S. and Turkish officials are to hold talks in Washington next week on the future of northern Iraq.

Under Operation Provide Comfort, a U.S.-led coalition, based at Incirlik Airbase in Turkey, has been stationed in

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the region under the pretext of giving aid and protection to Iraqi Kurds since the Persian Gulf war in 1991.

The Kurdistan Democratic Party, led by Mas'ud Barzani, and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan of Jalal Talabani have fought for control of northern Iraq in a conflict which has left more than 2,000 dead since May 1994.

The U.S.-led coalition has not been able to curb fratricidal war in Kurdistan. In fact, since the Persian Gulf war, the United States has spared no effort in creating a sphere of influence in Iraqi Kurdistan in order to establish elbowroom in the region, aiming at controlling regional affairs.

Our Kurdish brothers in Iraq should not forget that the U.S. is after its own interests in Iraqi Kurdistan. Therefore, in their talks with U.S. officials, Kurd leaders should remember that the territorial integrity of their country should not be compromised in any peace formula.

Iranian Radio on Christopher's Mediation in Syria-Israel Talks

LD1301155896 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 13 Jan 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The American Secretary of State, who is currently in the region, has returned to the occupied Palestine after his meeting with Syrian officials in Damascus on Friday January 12th. In his five-hour meeting with the Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad and other high-level officials in that country, the American State Secretary had submitted messages and offers from the Zionist Prime Minister Shim'on Peres, to the Syrian diplomats. According to political observers, the expansion of the dialogues to the military delegations and the two sides' foreign ministers has been one of the offers made by Peres to Damascus. In the second round of negotiations, which was held in the American state of Maryland, Syria did not agree to hold talks between military officials. However, this time, after mediation efforts by Christopher and the Syrian optimism towards a trend of peace talks, it seems that Tel Aviv-Damascus peace negotiations between the two sides' military experts will start on January 20th. Still, it should be remembered that the talks between the military officials and the chiefs of staff of the two sides reached a complete deadlock six months ago. Informed sources believe that the gap between the two sides is still very deep. Until Zionist regime is not willing to agree to the Syrian demands, the negotiations will only run (?vainly) in a vicious circle.

The Syrians still insist on the claim of the Golan Heights and the withdrawal of the Israeli forces from south Lebanon based on Resolutions 242, 338 and (?425) of the UN Security Council. In fact Maryland talks ended by resolving some minor differences and in new round of talks main issues will concern the security arrangements on both sides of the borders and establishing diplomatic and trade ties.

Anyhow, the differences between Damascus and Tel Aviv are still deep. Efforts by the U.S. to fill the gaps and finding a solution in an intensive manner should be taken into consideration. U.S. Secretary of State, on the verge of the presidential elections in the US and Israel, has explicitly acknowledged that the time is running out and that the issue should reach a favorable stage. Such explicit comments by the US Secretary of State, who travelled to the region twice in the past month, is indicative of the fact that pressure on Syria is on the rise. But whether Syria will forget its territorial claims should seriously be doubted. At the same time Syria's lenience vis-a-vis gaining all territorial claims in Syria and Lebanon is seen as [word indistinct].

Iranian Daily Dismisses Israel's 'Baseless Charges'

LD1401092996 Tehran IRNA in English 0855 GMT 14 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 14, IRNA — The Islamic Republic of Iran would not allow any country, no matter how powerful it might be, to endanger its interests, a morning daily wrote in its editorial today.

On the recent baseless charges levelled by the Zionist regime against Iran, the English-language 'TEHRAN TIMES' stressed that the Islamic republic would never allow Israel to interfere in its internal affairs.

"As an independent sovereign state, Iran has put an end to U.S. meddling in its affairs: It has likewise not compromised its principles in its relations with other world powers."

Referring to the 1980-88 Iraqi imposed war which was a clear testimony to the fact that Iran does not allow any country to threaten it, the daily said, "if Israelis think that through spreading baseless allegations, they can prepare a ground for further anti-Iran propaganda, they better remember that Iraq could not annex a single inch of Iranian territory despite support from all quarters of the world."

The editorial stressed that Iran is strongly opposed to any terrorist act as it is the chief victim of terrorism, adding that the sponsors of international terrorism, including the Zionist regime, should bear in mind that

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the Islamic republic is strong enough to defend its interests.

Iranian Commentary Sees 'Zionist' Hands in U.S. Conspiracies

LD1101151996 Tehran IRNA in English 1439 GMT 11 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 11, IRNA — A glance at the U.S. conspiracies against Iran during the past year indicates the multiplicity of illegal decision-making centers against the Islamic Republic.

Irrespective of the U.S. machinations after the coming to power of a popular government in Iran, last year the world was witness to the illegitimate plans of the U.S. Administration against the Iranian people and government.

An oil contract between Iran and the U.S. 'Conoco' oil company for the development of Sirri oil fields was cancelled due to the pressures exerted by the Zionists and the U.S. President.

No doubt, influential Zionist lobbies in the United States played a great role in the adoption of the decision by the U.S. Administration.

Although the contract for the development of oil fields off Sirri islands was granted to the French company Total, the Zionists are still going ahead with their plots against the Islamic Iran.

Following the cancellation of Conoco-Iran contract, Alfonzo D'Amato, the pro-Zionist American senator, tabled a proposal to the U.S. Congress to tighten the U.S. economic sanctions against Iran.

Based on D'Amato's proposal, all companies selling oil equipment to Iran will be subject to the U.S. embargo. Some 29 American senators voted in favor of the proposal.

However, the U.S. President Bill Clinton objected to the plan reasoning that it might hurt America's prestige in the world and affect its ties with Europe.

Later, President Bill Clinton had to retreat from his position when a Congressional committee began investigations into the possible involvement of the U.S. President and his wife in a financial scandal dubbed as White Water.

Meanwhile, the U.S. departments of Commerce and Energy warned that such extremist plans will inflict heavy damage on the American capitalists.

The White House had not yet been relieved of the shocks of such confusing plans that the extremist American Senator Newt Gingrich proposed the allocation of an 18-million-dollar budget for CIA to launch operations to topple the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Later, in a secret report to Clinton CIA confessed that even allocation of such a budget cannot have the least effect on destabilizing the pillars of the Islamic Iran.

Political and financial pressures of the power wielders and the possibility of the disclosure of the political scandals of the U.S. Administration, compelled the White House to present a new plan agreed upon by different groups, leading to the allocation of a 20- million-dollar budget for CIA to force Iran into compromise.

However, the plan received negative reactions by independent countries and groups in international arena which, by referring to the U.S. [as received] Charter, the Algiers Accord and the world trade laws, called the measure in contradiction with civilized behavior.

What goals, indeed, the U.S. is pursuing in its plans?

Experts believe that influential Zionist foundations in the U.S. Administration who, in recent years are witness to the successful and powerful implementation of the reconstruction effort in the Islamic Republic of Iran and its commitment to its principles, are desperately resorting to all means to confront the Islamic system.

Iranian Editorial Denies Israeli Charges of 'Terrorism'

NC1801214296 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 14 Jan 96 p 2

[Editorial: "Iran Strong Enough To Defend Its Interests"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Israeli intelligence services are once again at work, spreading baseless charges against the Islamic Republic of Iran. The Israeli state television said on Friday [12 January] that Iran has drawn up plans for a series of preventive strikes against Israel.

In a move to cover up its expansionist, interventionist acts, Israel attributes actions it wants to commit to other states. For instance, Israel attacked Iraqi nuclear installations in 1981 and repeated such acts in other countries with impunity. The Israeli intelligence service killed Abu Iyad, the head of the PLO political wing, in Tunisia a few years ago and was again not punished for such acts by the UN or other international bodies.

The late Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin welcomed the assassination of Fathi Al-Shaqaqi in Malta while his successor, Shim'on Peres, welcomed the assassination of Yahya 'Ayyash in the Gaza Strip a week ago.

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These are only few instances of Israeli interventionist, terrorist acts in less than a decade.

In comparison, the Islamic Republic of Iran has an absolutely clear record. No doubt, Iran would not allow any country, no matter how powerful it might be, to endanger its interests.

As an independent sovereign state, Iran has put an end to U.S. meddling in its affairs; it has likewise not compromised its principles in its relations with other world powers. Therefore, Iran is not about to allow Israel to interfere in its affairs or dominate it either.

The eight-year imposed war is a clear testimony to the fact that Iran does not allow any country to endanger its interests.

If Israelis think that through spreading baseless allegations, they can prepare a ground for further anti-Iran propaganda, they had better remember that Iraq could not annex a single inch of Iranian territory despite support from all quarters of the world.

Iran is the chief victim of terrorism. Hence, it is strongly opposed to any act of terrorism. The sponsors of international terrorism, including the Zionist regime, should bear in mind that Iran is strong enough to defend its interests and that Iran will not allow any country to endanger its interests.

UN Envoy Telephones Iran's Borujerdi on Afghan Crisis

LD1701222596 Tehran IRNA in English 2217 GMT 17 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 17, IRNA — The special envoy of the United Nations secretary-general for Afghan affairs, Mahmud Mestri, in a telephone conversation with the Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Asia-Pacific Affairs 'Ala'eddin Borujerdi, on Wednesday expressed hope that his talks in Afghanistan with the Taleban militia would convince them to enter into direct negotiations with Borhanoddin Rabbani's government.

Mestri added that in case the climate was favorable he will talk with President Rabbani on Thursday.

"We have come to the conclusion that direct negotiations are the best way to build understanding among the belligerent factions," said the U.N. envoy in his telephone conversation with the Iranian Foreign Ministry official.

He said that he would review the related issues with the Iranian officials after concluding his talks with the Afghan Government and factional leaders.

Borujerdi in response, expressed his pleasure over the recent negotiations in Afghanistan between the representatives of the Afghan Government and several opposing factions.

He added that Iran will continue its mediating efforts aimed at convincing the warring sides to sit at the negotiation table for working out an agreement for a peaceful settlement of the Afghan crisis.

During their conversation the two sides also reviewed the latest political developments in Afghanistan.

Iran has spared no efforts to see an end to the fratricide in neighbouring Afghanistan, and as part of its humanitarian efforts, held talks with the government in Kabul and the opposition.

Iran has also expressed its readiness to contribute to reconstruction efforts once peace is established in Afghanistan, and has matched its words with deeds by maintaining a steady flow of medical and other relief assistance to that strife-torn country.

Iran's Borujerdi Views Efforts To Stop Afghan Fighting

LD1401115196 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 14 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Efforts made by the Islamic Republic of Iran to end the fighting by Afghan groups and initiate talks among the fighting groups have borne significant results and rocket attacks by the fighting groups on various areas of that country — except Kabul — have stopped.

Announcing this in an interview with the ISLAMIC REPUBLIC NEWS AGENCY, the deputy foreign minister for Asia and Oceania affairs ['Ala'eddin Borujerdi] said: Iran will continue its political efforts in order to establish total peace in Afghanistan.

Mr. Borujerdi pointed out: During his recent visit to Pakistan, Iran's foreign minister carried out useful talks on the Afghan issue with the Pakistani officials. He said: In the future, exchange of views with Pakistani officials and leaders of Afghan groups will continue.

Concerning the new moves by the UN envoy for Afghanistan, he said: As we have announced many times, the Islamic Republic of Iran believes talks to be the best way to resolve the Afghan issue, and we will welcome any political move to that end.

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Iranian Radio: Turkish Politics, 'International Scheme' Against RP Seen

NC1201074196 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Turkish 1630 GMT 10 Jan 96

[Unattributed commentary: "Political Developments in Turkey"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The pro-Islamic Welfare Party [RP] emerged as the leading party in the Turkish election on 24 December. President Suleyman Demirel has designated RP leader Necmettin Erbakan as the new prime minister, stepping up the political parties' work to establish the new government.

The RP has emerged as the leading party in the elections. But it lacks the strength it needs in parliament to establish the new government alone. The RP has attracted international attention as the leading party. It has already begun to hold talks with the other political parties and has said it is willing to establish a coalition with them.

The secular and pro-Western political parties, which maintain an anti-Islamic approach, are also trying to establish a coalition. Their effort will encounter serious problems. Many of the political parties have indirectly rejected the RP's effort to establish a coalition. Only the Motherland Party [ANAP] has said it is not opposed to the RP and can consider the issue. Erbakan said that after the election he would hold talks and maintain friendly relations with all the political parties.

The political situation in Turkey could accommodate a coalition between the RP and ANAP. Some of the main tasks of the new coalition government will be to maintain the struggle against terrorism, establish a free political atmosphere, struggle against unemployment, increase public sector wages, and help the poor. But everyone knows that there is a significant difference between the political and economic programs of the RP and ANAP. So, Necmettin Erbakan and ANAP leader Mesut Yilmaz are expected to find it difficult to reach an agreement in principle to establish a new government. Secular and pro-Western circles in Turkey believe that Yilmaz will not support Erbakan's view that Turkey blindly depends on the Western world and that the RP should try to end that dependence. Zionist, capitalist, and secular circles have put significant pressure on the right-wing parties to force them to join their forces. But the enmity and controversy between Mesut Yilmaz and True Path Party [DYP] leader Tansu Ciller have prevented the ANAP and DYP from joining forces to establish a new party under the title ANAYOL.

Political observers believe the political and economic crisis in Turkey will worsen if Erbakan fails to establish the new government. International financing establishments have tried to prevent Erbakan from coming to power. They have suspended the credits they agreed to extend to Turkey until further notice. This is the first sign of the international schemes against Erbakan and the RP.

Tehran Radio Reports 5 Kurdish 'Militants' Killed in Turkey

NC1101205096 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Turkish 1630 GMT 10 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Five Kurdish militants have been killed in a clash with the security forces in Sivas, Turkey. The Turkish security officials have disclosed that the five militants were killed in a security operation in Sivas yesterday.

It has been reported that nearly 20,000 people have been killed since the Workers Party of Kurdistan's began its armed struggle against the Turkish Government in 1984.

Turkish Energy Minister Arrives in Iran for Talks on Gas Pipeline

LD1401104296 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0430 GMT 14 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Turkish minister for energy and natural resources [Sinasi Altiner] arrived in Iran heading a delegation of officials from gas firms and the Turkish gas pipeline.

According to a report by the Central News Unit, the Turkish minister is to meet the oil minister for talks about export of Iranian gas to Turkey and the construction of a 1,200-kilometer-long gas pipeline in Iran to the Turkish border and to Ankara. Turkey is footing the bill for the pipeline.

Gas Agreement Approved Between Iran, Turkey

LD1401185296 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1730 GMT 14 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Our country's oil minister, Mr. Gholam Reza Aqazadeh, met this evening the Turkish energy minister [Sinasi Altiner].

The Turkish and Iranian delegations talked about the pipeline for the transfer of Iran's gas to Turkey and sale and purchase of gas between the two countries, within the framework of an agreement signed in Ordibehesht [Iranian month from 21 April - 22 May].

After the meeting, it was announced that the two countries' oil officials have given their final approval

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to an agreement on the sale and purchase of gas and the agreement will be signed in Tehran next week.

Altiner referred to his country's plans to expand its industries, and agreements signed between Ankara and Russia, which will supply Ankara with portion of its required gas. He said: The gas pipeline transferring gas from Russia to Turkey has reached its maximum capacity and Turkey wants to purchase another portion of its required gas from Iran.

He added: We will return to Turkey to further study the technical issues and will return to Tehran next week to sign the gas agreement.

Turkish Official Interviewed on Foreign Policy

LD1801103696 Tehran IRNA in English 1010 GMT 18 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 18, IRNA — If the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries are allowed to exploit their natural resources by themselves without any external influences and avoid becoming spheres of influence of external powers, they would be progressing and developing more rapidly, said a Turkish official.

In an interview with the English-language daily 'IRAN NEWS' printed Thursday, Umut Arik, an official of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs added that Turkey distinguishes between the individual members of the CIS and the group as a whole.

Arik, who is also a high-ranking member of the Turkish International Cooperation Agency (TICA), represented his country in the just completed seminar on security and foreign policy in Central Asia and the Caucasus sponsored by Iranian Foreign Ministry's Institute for Political and International Studies (IPIS).

Commenting on his country's foreign policy, he noted, "I'm sure the Iranian foreign policy is also looking for security and stability in the region. We are first and foremost hoping to obtain conditions of stability, security and peace in this region so that we might be able to continue with our own development in Turkey."

Turkey's second objective is to help create a circumstance under which there would be as little foreign intervention as possible, so that these countries may start exploiting their natural resources as their national riches, rather than as a part of a system or community of nations, Arik concluded.

Iran's President, Outgoing Croatian Envoy on Balkan Developments

LD1401121996 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 14 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Osman Muftic, ambassador of the Republic of Croatia, was received by President 'Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani this morning at the end of his term of service in Iran. He presented a report about the latest developments in the Balkans since the signing of the Dayton peace agreement. He also said: In view of the talks between the Bosnian and Croatian presidents, we hope that any outstanding problems will be solved in a spirit of understanding and through peaceful negotiation. The Croatian ambassador also called for the greatest possible expansion of bilateral ties with the Islamic Republic of Iran in all areas of mutual interest, especially political, economic, and cultural.

Hashemi-Rafsanjani, for his part, expressed pleasure about the establishment of peace and calm in the Balkans region and said: Everyone must now concentrate all their efforts on the consolidation of peace and calm in that region and strive to resolve problems through talks and by peaceful means. The president added: The world of Islam expects to see the difficulties and injustices inflicted on the Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina made good; we, for our part, will do our utmost to maintain the close, friendly relations between Bosnia and Croatia.

Kuwait City Mayor Praises Tehran Municipal Planning

LD1401221696 Tehran IRNA in English 2150 GMT 14 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 14, IRNA — Kuwait's mayor ('Abd-al-Rahman al-Huti) said here Sunday that the experience of Tehran municipality in urban development and cultural areas is very valuable.

He said on the first day of his sightseeing around Tehran that he had visited the traffic organization, traffic control company and Khavaran culture house, and expressed hope that his own country would be able to copy the culture houses and their services to the youth and young adults in Tehran.

The mayor of Kuwait said the system of intelligent control of traffic in Tehran was as advanced as the best of them in other parts of the world.

On Monday [15 January] and Tuesday the mayor of Kuwait and his delegation is to visit sites of technical and industrial projects now being undertaken by Tehran municipality, and on Wednesday they are scheduled to visit Esfahan, capital of Esfahan province of Iran.

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Iranian Minister Discusses Ties With Kuwaiti Mayor

LD1501224396 Tehran IRNA in English 2233 GMT 15 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 15, IRNA — Interior Minister 'Ali Mohammad Besharati in his meeting here today with Kuwaiti Mayor Abder-Rahman al-Houti, said that what he had seen of Tehran city, is the fruit of the six-year long efforts of the Tehran municipality.

He said the municipality's job in implementing principled and sound infrastructural projects is all the more commendable in view of the population of 10 people million of Tehran and its almost two- and-a-half million vehicles.

Tehran municipality, said Besharati, with the support of the people and the government, has succeeded in solving civic problems.

He emphasized on the significance of cultural values in civic administration and townplanning, and said, "we believe that in the present age, the ringleaders of global arrogance have decided to confront Muslim countries with the tools of culture and propagation.

"They want to lure Muslims towards their own culture, and if we fail to utilize proper weapons in this regard we stand to be disarmed against the enemy," Besharati warned. He called for giving cultural values their proper worth in society and said that cities should be planned in accordance with Islamic culture and traditional architecture.

The interior minister, calling Iran-Kuwait ties as "fraternal", offered to help Kuwait with the Islamic republic's experiences in this field.

Al-Houti, welcomed the proposal, and said Kuwait was keen to utilize the experience of Tehran's municipality in townplanning and civic affairs.

He expressed pleasure with his Tehran trip, and said Iran's progress in different fields was noteworthy.

The Kuwaiti official, who has had a sightseeing tour of the Iranian capital and its various municipal departments over the past two days, called his trip to Iran "frutful and constructive".

He summed up bilateral relations as "friendly" and said that Kuwaiti officials were willing to expand relations with Iran in all spheres.

Velayati Visit Seen as Chance To Rectify Kuwait's Stand

LD1601141696 Tehran IRNA in English 1241 GMT 16 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 16, IRNA — The English [language] daily 'IRAN NEWS' Tuesday considered the current visit to Kuwait of Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati as a good opportunity to make Kuwaiti leadership recognize the unacceptability of their dual policies.

The editorial said the Kuwaiti leadership "pays lip service to good relations with Iran but at the same time, at the instigation of the United Arab Emirates, condemns Tehran as a danger to the Persian Gulf Arab states and as a usurper of Arab lands."

It said the case applies to certain members of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council including Qatar, Oman and Kuwait.

Despite their desire for good relations with Iran, "when these shaykhdoms get together with other Arab countries, they issue false statements accusing Iran of being a regional threat and of occupying Arab lands," said the paper.

The editorial termed such a policy of dualism contrary to the Iranian and the Arab and most importantly the Muslim tradition.

Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati heading a political delegation is in Kuwait to discuss promotion of mutual ties.

Iran: Velayati Trip Seen Part of Regional Cooperation Drive

NC1601100896 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0445 GMT 16 Jan 96

[Commentary by the News Research and Commentary Group]

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister Dr. Velayati, who has gone to Kuwait at the head of a high-ranking political delegation, exchanged views with his Kuwaiti counterpart in the first round of his talks with the Kuwaiti officials. In the next rounds, our foreign minister will meet the Kuwaiti amir, the crown prince, and the speaker to discuss bilateral and regional issues.

During our foreign minister's discussions with his Kuwaiti counterpart, the two sides stressed the need for regional cooperation to ensure stability and security in the strategic Persian Gulf and also called for the expansion of bilateral and regional cooperation. The

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Iranian and Kuwaiti foreign ministers examined the elements obstructing regional cooperation and stressed the need for uniform and common steps by the Persian Gulf countries to confront these elements.

Iran raised the issue of the need for regional cooperation and efforts to create regional arrangements with the active participation of countries on both sides of the Persian Gulf without the big powers after the oil war and at a time when there was talk about creating new regional arrangements. Since then, all of Iran's efforts have focused on this and it has tried—by removing misunderstandings on the regional level—to expand ties and cooperation, bilateral, multilateral, and regional.

Iran's outlook takes into consideration the view of the big powers, which are trying to make their presence in this region permanent out of their need for the Persian Gulf's immense resources. When peace and stability in the region is discussed the big powers propose arrangements to ensure their own interests and presence. But since these powers only think of how to ensure their own interests and do not think about the interests of the regional nations, their presence can lead to the interests of the Persian Gulf countries being ignored.

Such are the unfavorable and negative impacts of the presence of the big powers in the Persian Gulf that Iran is trying to block arrangements that ignore the interests of the regional countries. It is striving to expand regional cooperation through extensive contacts with the regional countries so that it can thus pave the way for arrangements with the participation of the regional countries and remove the grounds for the presence of foreign powers in the Persian Gulf. Contacts and discussions with the Kuwaiti officials in parallel with discussions with other regional countries should be assessed in line with Iran's strategy.

Iranian Foreign Minister Velayati Sums Up Kuwaiti Trip on Return

LD1601181996 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1730 GMT 16 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] On his return from Kuwait this evening, Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati said he had held talks with the Kuwaiti authorities about important regional and international issues and ways of expanding and deepening mutual relations and cooperation.

Mr. Velayati added: On the basis of their common interests, cultural and religious ties, and common sea borders, Iran and Kuwait have taken good steps toward deepening relations, friendship, and political and economic cooperation.

He stressed: Consultation and visits between the officials of the two countries would be effective to gain mutual trust, prevent foreign influence and interference, and maintain stability and security in the region.

Tehran Commentary on Iran-Kuwait Relations

LD1601165296 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 16 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Islamic Republic of Iran's Foreign Minister Dr. Velayati, on Monday, 15 January, left the country for Kuwait at the head of a high-ranking political delegation. During his stay in Kuwait, the Iranian foreign minister met senior Kuwaiti officials, including his counterpart. The trip is a response to the Kuwaiti foreign ministers's trip to Iran last September.

With regards to the separate visits of the Kuwaiti higher education minister to Tehran in September and May, and Mr. Nateq- Nuri's April visit to Kuwait, one can assume that the two states are removing some of the shortcomings in the two countries' relations. They are looking for their lost opportunities during the imposed war. The Islamic Republic of Iran and Kuwait, within the bilateral ties and multilateral regional relations' framework, have high potentials. The meetings and dialogues between the high-ranking officials of the two countries can pave the grounds for working on the potentials, specially when the Islamic Republic of Iran and Kuwait, as two Muslim neighboring states, enjoy somehow similar views on many political and economic issues. They believe in establishing a security mechanism by the Persian Gulf countries which guarantees peace and tranquillity in the region, and will clear the area from foreigners.

Due to great significance of the Persian [Gulf] countries in terms of economy and need for creating a lasting peace in the region, the issue of security will be one of the topics of discussion in Kuwait. Apart from the political issues, Iran and Kuwait can have economic cooperation on various fields in the region. This has made it inevitable for the officials of the two countries to pursue such plans. The Islamic Republic of Iran has spared no effort to establish friendly relations with the neighbors in the Persian Gulf. The presence of Dr. Velayati in the area is indicative of these efforts aimed at achieving the desired relations.

Iran's Va'ezi Confers With Visiting Polish Deputy Foreign Minister

LD1501112396 Tehran IRNA in English 0700 GMT 15 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan 15, IRNA — The visiting Polish deputy minister for foreign economic

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relations Jerzy Kaminski here Sunday discussed Tehran-Warsaw economic cooperation with Deputy Foreign Minister for Euro-American Affairs Mahmud Va'ezi.

The Polish official emphasized that Warsaw attaches great importance to its ties with Tehran, reported the English daily 'TEHRAN TIMES.'

Kaminski further called for the expansion of economic cooperation and establishment of closer links between the Iranian and Polish Chambers of Commerce.

Meanwhile, Va'ezi expressed hope that the visit of the Polish delegation will be productive. Va'ezi added that continued cooperation in agriculture, industry and ship-building ventures offers suitable grounds for promoting bilateral ties.

Iranian Daily on Vice President's Trip to Kazakhstan

LD1501111396 Tehran IRNA in English 0756 GMT 15 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 16, IRNA — The Persian [language] daily 'ABRAR' in a commentary Monday [15 January] wrote that First Vice-President Hassan Habibi's current visit to Almaty will open new horizons in bilateral relations.

Habibi, who set off on an official three-day visit to Almaty this morning, is the second highest ranking Iranian official after President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani, to visit Kazakhstan since independence in 1991.

Kazakhstan ranks first among the Central Asian states in terms of economic and trade potentials and is rich in natural resources, which mainly remained untapped under the domination of the former Soviet Union.

"Iran's transit routes and facilities offer golden opportunities for the Central Asian and the Caucasus countries to gain access to international waters."

Through the Islamic Republic of Iran the Central Asian republics would be able to reach the Indian subcontinent, Japan, Africa and Arab countries, vital for the badly needed economic development of the newly-independent republics.

Iran Officials on Oil Cooperation Agreement With Kazakhstan

LD1601172096 Tehran IRNA in English 1409 GMT 16 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 16, IRNA — Iran and Kazakhstan on Tuesday signed two agreements and one memorandum of understanding for expansion of cooperation in various fields.

Based on the two agreements inked by Iran's first vice-president, Hasan Habibi and Kazakh Prime Minister Akezhan Qazhygeldin the two countries will guarantee each other's investments and lift extra taxes on their trade.

The memorandum of understanding was signed by the deputy oil minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the minister of industries, oil and gas of Kazakhstan.

The memorandum provides that the Islamic Republic of Iran will receive Kazakhstan's oil in its northern ports on the Caspian Sea for domestic consumption and deliver the same amount of oil to customers of Kazakhstan in the southern Iranian ports on the Persian Gulf.

Elaborating on the details of oil cooperation between the two countries, Habibi told reporters in Almaty that Iran will receive Kazakh crude oil in the Caspian Sea by changing the route of its pipelines and carry it to Tehran's refinery for domestic use, and then will deliver the same amount of its own crude to purchasers of Kazakh oil in southern Iran.

[Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian at 1530 GMT on 16 January adds: "Our country's First Vice President Hasan Habibi and Akezhan Qazhygeldin, prime minister of Kazakhstan, this morning at Almaty, described the outcome of their talks.

"Habibi emphasized that the two countries were interested and willing to increase their relations. He said: More than 40 cooperation agreements have been signed between the two countries so far.

"He added: During this visit, we reached agreement about cooperation between Iran and Kazakhstan over the transfer and sale of Kazakhstan's oil. He pointed to the emphasis placed by both countries on the need for determining the Caspian Sea's legal regime as quickly as possible. He said: The Caspian Sea should be a sea of peace and tranquillity.

"The Kazakh prime minister welcomed the establishment of links between his country and the Persian Gulf littoral countries via Iran's railways. He hoped that commercial exchanges between the two countries will increase more than before.

"He also called for greater expansion of relations between the two countries."]

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Iran's Habibi Returns From Kazakhstan, Notes Oil Agreement

LD1701161596 Tehran IRNA in English 1603 GMT 17 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 17, IRNA — Iran's first vice-president, Hasan Habibi, said upon return from a three day official visit to Kazakhstan Wednesday that based on the agreements reached between Iran and Kazakhstan, the latter's oil will be exported to Persian Gulf countries after being refined in Tehran.

Habibi said that in the course of the visit it was agreed that the reconstruction of Aktau port of Kazakhstan would be entrusted to the Islamic Republic of Iran.

He stressed that the outcome of his visit showed that the two countries are firmly in favor of long-term cooperation and of promoting mutual relations.

Australian Official Says U.S Anti-Iran Move 'Unjustifiable'

LD1501132696 Tehran IRNA in English 1251 GMT 15 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 15, IRNA — Visiting President of Australian Senate, Michael Beahan here on Monday [15 January] termed the recent move of the U.S. Congress against Iran as unjustifiable.

In a meeting with Iranian speaker of parliament, Hojjat ol-Eslam 'Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri, Beahan said Australian companies are ready to cooperate with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The Australian official described Iranian people as hard-working, honest and reliable and added that there are appropriate grounds for expansion of cooperation between Iran and Australia especially in trade with the Central Asia.

Beahan expressed pleasure with the current friendly relations between Tehran and Canberra and said the Australian people and companies hold a positive view towards the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Hojjat ol-Eslam Nateq-Nuri said the U.S. pressure on international companies to dissuade them from cooperating with Iran runs contrary to the regulations of the world trade and that allocation of a budget by the U.S. Congress for subversive operations against the Islamic Republic of Iran was outright interference in the internal affairs of Iran.

Nateq-Nuri said that Western countries follow a double-standard approach towards the human rights issue in Iran and that the West has always used the human rights as a political leverage against the independent states including the Islamic Republic of Iran.

He said the Islamic Republic of Iran was ready to expand relations with the Western states on the basis of mutual interest and respect, but, the U.S. is excluded from this unless it abandons its interventionist policy against Iran.

Nateq-Nuri said in the meantime there is no obstacle in the way of expanding Tehran-Canberra relations and hoped that a trade balance would be brought about between Iran and Australia.

Iran's Rafsanjani Meets With Australian Senate President

LD1601121896 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 16 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Hashemi-Rafsanjani today received Michael Beahan, president of the Australian Senate, who is visiting our country heading a high-ranking delegation.

The president of the Australian Senate referred to the historical and good cooperation between Iran and Australia, and said: "Australia attaches special importance to its ties with Iran and no foreign power can influence these ties." He added: "In our view the only way to reach an understanding among countries is to continue friendly and peaceful negotiations."

Michael Beahan then referred to his country's policy of expanding cooperation with Asian countries, especially the littoral states of the Indian Ocean. He said that an important example of this cooperation is Australia's participation in Iran's vast economic projects, especially the project to build a pipeline to deliver gas from Iran to Pakistan and India.

Beahan expressed his concern over the effect of increasing tension between Iran and the United States and asked for our president's views on this issue.

President Hashemi-Rafsanjani said: "The United States' hostility toward the Iranian nation dating from before the victory of the Islamic Revolution is behind the existing situation between Iran and the United States."

The president referred to the good relations between Iran and Australia and welcomed the expansion of ties in all spheres, especially in the trade, economic, and political spheres.

President Hashemi-Rafsanjani also said he hopes that peace and security will become established in the region in light of the cooperation and further exchanges of views among the countries in the Indian Ocean region.

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Meanwhile, at a meeting with [Hasan] Rowhani, Deputy Speaker of the Islamic Majles, Michael Beahan, president of the Australian Senate, said that the presence of foreign forces in any region of the world is not conducive to the security of that region. He added: "Cooperation among the countries of a region in this regard [on security] is the only way to protect security in any part of the world."

He referred to the good relations between Australia and Iran and said that the prospects for further relations is very bright. He added: "Australia is in favor of further expansion of its ties with Iran."

Australian Official Proposes Joint Venture in Oil Projects With Iran

LD1601201096 Tehran IRNA in English 1903 GMT 16 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 16, IRNA — Visiting president of the Senate of Australia, Michael Beahan, told the Iranian Oil Minister Gholam Reza Aqazadeh-Kho'i here Tuesday that his country had good technical capacity for joint ventures in oil and gas projects with Iran.

He said he had prevously met with the Iranian President 'Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjnai and Majles speaker Nateq-Nuri, and added that Australia greatly values relations with Iran.

Iran's Velayati Confers With Australian Senate President

LD1701175796 Tehran IRNA in English 1610 GMT 17 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 17, IRNA — Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati, in a meeting with the president of Australian Senate Michael Beaham on Wednesday said allocation of dlrs. [dollars] 20 million by the U.S. Congress for subversive operations against Iran indicates Washington's frustration in carrying out its foreign policy in this region.

Velayati added that such uncalculated plans and propaganda campaigns on the part of the United States run counter to international laws and are carried out for election purposes in the United States.

The foreign minister also evaluated as positive the common grounds for Tehran-Canberra cooperation in view of the great potentials of Iran.

Pakistani Envoy to Tehran Discusses Afghan Problems

NC1901100296 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 10 Jan 96 pp 1, 14

[Report on "exclusive" interview with Pakistani Ambassador to Iran Khalid Mahmud by A. Revani-Moqaddam in Tehran; date not given]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran—Pakistani Ambassador to Tehran, Khalid Mahmud, said that Rabbani's presidential legacy is doubtful because his term ended in June 1994.

In an exclusive interview with the TEHRAN TIMES, the Pakistani ambassador said that under the Islamabad Accord, Rabbani's presidential tenure ended in June, but through questionable means he extended his illegal tenure until December 1994. Rabbani extended his term again and promised UN Ambassador Mestiri that he would step down on March 21, 1995, but again did not honor his words and remained, said Khalid Mahmoud.

Terming Pakistan's role in Afghanistan as a neutral observer, he said that Rabbani's unreliability is the main reason why the Taleban cannot trust his proposal to sit at the negotiation table.

The ambassador also said that Pakistan has been deeply affected by the Afghan crisis; it was the first country to raise its voice against Soviet aggression. He added Pakistan had spared no effort in bringing about peace in Afghanistan.

As long as this conflict continues Pakistan cannot he released from terrorism and drug trafficking, the ambassador said. It is Pakistan's sincere hope that stability would return to Afghanistan. It is in Pakistan's interest that peace would return to Afghanistan so that Pakistan can have access to the Central Asian markets. Khalid Mahmud said that Pakistan has followed a policy of noninterference in the internal affairs of all countries, but it has been trying to persuade all Afghan factions to gather round a table and seek a settlement which could lead to the establishment of a coherent government. The ambassador added that Pakistan does not support one group over another.

"Some foreign countries interfere in the internal affairs of Afghanistan," the Pakistani diplomat said.

The ambassador said that India is not only providing Rabbani's regime with military equipment but also giving technical assistance, particularly in the field of civil aviation. He added that Pakistan is not against India having a normal relationship with Afghanistan, but its military assistance to Afghanistan has negative consequences in the region.

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As more than half of Afghanistan is now under Taleban's control, their participation in any negotiation is essential, Mahmud said. He further stressed that a durable peace would not be achieved unless all Afghan factions are consulted.

He expressed Pakistan's concern over the U.S. Senate's anti-Iran move, saying that such actions will not only be a danger to peace and stability in the region but are also contrary to U. S. claims of being a global peacemaker.

He termed Pakistan and Iran relations as extremely cordial and brotherly.

Iran's Deputy Minister Meets With Afghan Commerce Minister

LD1501182496 Tehran IRNA in English 1737 GMT 15 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 15, IRNA — Deputy Foreign Minister for Asia-Pacific Affairs, Ala'eddin Borujerdi, said here on Monday [15 January] that if the rival factions in Afghanistan do not sit at the negotiating table and sort out their differences, the conditions for restoration of peace would become more difficult.

Borujerdi in a meeting with the visiting Afghan Minister of Commerce, Hosayn Alemi [Balkh], reiterated Iran's disapproval of the continued infighting in Afghanistan.

He called on the belligerent parties to enter into talks to bring about peace and security in Afghanistan.

Alemi appreciated Iran's peace efforts in Afghanistan and said, "today, we are witnessing the fruits of Iranian mediation efforts, and the present state of tranquility in Afghanistan is indebted to Iranian endeavours."

He said the Afghan government's readiness to hold talks with the opposing factions is indication of sincere intentions of the Kabul government and its interest in peace and security.

The two officials exchanged views on the latest political developments in Afghanistan.

Iran's Borujerdi Meets OSCE Official, Discusses Afghan Crisis

LD1501193496 Tehran IRNA in English 1849 GMT 15 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 15, IRNA — Deputy foreign minister for Asia-Pacific affairs, Ala'eddin Borujerdi, said here on Monday [15 January] lack of efforts to help solve political and economic problems in Afghanistan would spread unrest to other parts of the region.

In a meeting with member of German Federal Assemby and vice-president of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Willy Weimer, Borujerdi said that it is the responsibility of all countries including the Western states to help resolve the economic and health problems of Afghan people.

He said peace and security is a requirement for economic development in the region and the Islamic republic spares no effort to help settle any regional crisis.

The German parliamentarian, who is in Tehran to attend the conference on security and diplomacy in Central Asia and Caucasus, said that "Afghanistan is among the crisis spots of the world and we are trying hard to help resolve such issues, because regional problems are liable to engulf other areas."

He said Germany has given importance to the Afghan problem and that Tehran-Bonn cooperation in this regard would be worthy.

Weimar, in his meeting with Borujerdi, also appreciated the Iranian plan to work out a railway project designed to link China to Europe through Iran.

The two officials exchanged views on issues of mutual interest and prospects for cooperation in the Asian continent.

European Official Praises Iran's Stabilizing Role in Region

LD1601114396 Tehran IRNA in English 0938 GMT 16 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan 16 (IRNA) — A senior European official stressed that Iran is playing a stabilizing role in Afghanistan and the entire region.

In an interview with the English-language daily IRAN NEWS on Tuesday, vice-president of the parliamentary assembly of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Willy Wimmer, said that the Islamic Republic respects the borders and the sovereignty of other countries and pursues a "constructive" policy towards its neighbors.

"We from the German side, are interested in the integrity and stability of Afghanistan but everybody knows that this integrity and stability is affected by many other factors beyond our influence," he added.

Wimmer is a prominent participant at the 5th "Seminar on Security and Foreign Policy in Central Asia and the Caucasus," which was inaugurated by Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati at the Institute for Political and International Studies (IPIS) on Sunday.

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He said central Asia and the Caucasus could be an area of cooperation but "because of the many unsolved problems, it also could be an area of confrontation."

On cooperation between Iran and Europe and obstacles standing in the way of the promotion of ties, Wimmer noted that dialog between both bodies was the best means.

Iranian Envoy on Draft Oil Exploitation Accord With Nigeria

LD1201183996 Tehran IRNA in English 1553 GMT 12 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 12, IRNA — Iran and Nigeria decided to enter into cooperation regarding oil exploitation, production and marketing, Iranian ambassador to Nigeria, Bahman Mobarakeh told reporters in Lagos on Thursday. The two countries, he said, have signed a draft agreement in this field, he added. Iran and Nigeria are also expected to sign an agreement in the field of cultural cooperation, said the ambassador. Mobarakeh noted that both the two countries are members of several international organizations and cooperate with each other in several fields.

The conclusion of the oil agreement was the outcome of the recent visit to Lagos of Iranian oil experts, who held talks with Nigerian officials on important oil issues.

Nigerian Leader Appreciates Iran's Support for His Country

LD1501171496 Tehran IRNA in English 1502 GMT 15 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 15, IRNA — Nigerian Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces General Sani Abacha in Lagos Monday appreciated Iran's support for his country.

In a meeting with the Iranian ambassador in Nigeria Bahman Taherian Mobarakeh [name as received], Abacha described Tehran-Lagos relations as friendly and hoped for further expansion of bilateral ties.

The Nigerian leader also called for Iranian assistance to develop industry in that country.

Meanwhile, Nigerian Minister of Petroleum Don Etete in a separate meeting with the Iranian diplomat extended an invitation to his Iranian counterpart Gholam Reza Aqazadeh to visit Lagos.

He said Nigeria is ready to sign an agreement with Iran on oil cooperation.

In another meeting, Nigerian Minister of State for Education Alhaji Wada [name as received] has described as successful the recent visit to Tehran of a Nigerian delegation and called for development of Tehran-Lagos relations.

Iranian, German Parliamentary Officials Discuss Relations

LD1501173096 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 15 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] At a meeting today with Mr. Willy Wimmer, the vice president of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe [OSCE], Deputy Majles Speaker Hasan Rowhani described the trade relations between Iran and Germany as good. He called for the trade relations to be turned into comprehensive economic relations and for a balance to be brought about in that respect.

Referring to the recent hue and cry at the German Parliament in connection with Iran, while expressing regret about the double standards applied by the German Parliament on Iran, he said such issues stemmed from the representatives of the German Parliament lacking correct information about Iran. He said more traffic between representatives of the two countries' parliaments, and particularly making parliamentary friendship groups more active will be effective factors in removing such ambiguities.

The secretary of the State Supreme National Security Council said ridding the Middle East of mass destruction weapons was necessary to ease tension in the region. Declaring Iran's preparedness to act on that proposal, he called for the OSCE's cooperation in that respect.

Referring to the recent approval of the U.S. Congress against the Islamic Republic of Iran he said: As a country, we are determined to preserve our independence and will, under no circumstances, be prepared to drown our culture in foreign cultures.

Referring to the common denominators between the two countries and the affection of the two nations for each other, Wimmer said: Mutual relations should not be confined to commercial and economic ties. They should be expanded in all fields in a coordinated manner.

While thanking Iran for its efforts to bring about and maintain peace and stability in the region, he welcomed Iran's proposal to cooperate with the OSCE.

He said Iran's geographic position in the region, particularly in connection with Central Asian countries, was unique. He said trilateral economic and political activities between Iran, Germany, and Central Asian countries will be beneficial.

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Iran Official Views Appointment of New Russian Foreign Minister

LD1601172296 Tehran IRNA in English 1604 GMT 16 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 16, IRNA — Deputy Foreign Minister for Educational and Research Affairs, 'Abbas Maleki, said on Thursday that with the new Russian foreign minister taking office, Tehran-Moscow relations will grow greatly.

Maleki made the statement at the closing session of the three day gathering on security and diplomacy in Central Asia and Caucasia attended by researchers and thinkers from 19 countries.

The Foreign Ministry official said there is difference of view between Iran and Russia, but what prevails is understanding and close cooperation, noting that with the change in the Russian Foreign Ministry such cooperation will grow.

Maleki added that 400 private companies are active in Kazakhstan and near the same number in Uzbekistan, and noted that Iran has regular shipping traffic to and from five important ports of the Caspian Sea, and intercontinental railway is under construction from Shanghai to Europe, with Iran serving as the main link. He further added that Iran's roads are unsparingly at the disposal of these republics.

The deputy foreign minister said biased propaganda is disseminated by the U.S. mass media to the effect that Iran was spreading radicalism and fundamentalism to the Central Asian republics.

Maleki pointed out that Central Asia and Caucasia do not need Islamic fundamentalism, for most of these countries excluding Armenia and Georgia are Muslim states. He noted that there are almost 10,000 mosques in these countries, and no government can accomplish this important task without the help and desire of people.

Iran's Va'ezi on Developing Ties With Russia, Central Asian States

LD1501152996 Tehran IRNA in English 1420 GMT 15 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 15, IRNA — Deputy foreign minister for Euro-American affairs, Mahmud Va'ezi, said that Iran-Russia relations are not detrimental to any country and that cooperation of the two countries could curb the crisis in Tajikistan.

Meeting with the visiting deputy head of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Va'ezi pointed out that Iran's foreign policy is based on removing tension and that Iran is interested in preserving and expanding relations with the newly- independent republics in Central Asia and Caucasia.

He stressed that the Caspian Sea is the common heritage of five countries circling the sea and can serve as the axis for cooperation among them.

The meeting took place on the sidelines of a international seminar on Central Asia and Caucasia which opened in Tehran Sunday.

Libyan Agriculture Minister in Tehran for Talks

LD1701175296 Tehran IRNA in English 1333 GMT 17 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 17, IRNA — The Libyan Secretary for Agrarian Reform and Land Reclamation, 'Isa 'Abd-al- Kafi al-Sid, who arrived here this morning heading a delegation, held talks with the Iranian Minister of Agriculture, 'Isa Kalantari.

The two sides, in their first round of talks, discussed cooperation between the two countries in agricultural fields such as training of manpower and research, checking spread of deserts, manufacture of agricultural machinery and sprinkle and under pressure irrigation.

The Libyan official during his 6-day stay in Iran will inspect some agricultural projects in Dasht-e-moghan, Esfahan and Khuzestan.

Iran's Borujerdi Views Oil, Gas, Rail Cooperation With Central Asia

LD1601202896 Tehran IRIB Television Third Program Network in English 1915 GMT 16 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The head of the Cooperation and Development Organization in Central Asia and Caucasus, Mr. (Erik), met Iran's deputy foreign minister for Asia Pacific affairs, Mr. Borujerdi.

Referring to measures for the construction of railways and transfer of oil and gas that link Central Asia to Europe through Iran and Turkey, Mr. (Erik) denied propaganda by foreign mass media on the existence of competition between Iran and Turkey in Central Asia and Caucasus.

At the meeting Mr. Borujerdi said: Both Iran and Turkey do not want foreigners to intervene in their regional affairs.

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Iran Guardian Council Member 'Severely' Injured in Road Accident

LD1801173096 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 18 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Following the hospitalization of Ayatollah Mo'men, a clerical member of the Guardian Council, President Hashemi-Rafsanjani issued the necessary orders for the monitoring of and a speedy provision of Ayatollah Mo'men's medical needs.

Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani declared the president's office responsible for monitoring Ayatollah Mo'men's medical condition, to be able to have up-to-the-minute information on his treatment.

Ayatollah Mo'men, a clerical member of the Guardian Council, was involved in an accident on the Tehran-Qom highway this morning and was severely injured. He is at present receiving treatment in Tehran.

Iran's Basij Forces Concludes Civil Maneuver in Kerman Province

LD1301160296 Tehran IRNA in English 1537 GMT 13 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kerman, Jan. 13, IRNA — Some 34 battalions of the Basij (volunteer forces) wound up their civil maneuver in Kerman Province on Friday [12 January].

Spokesman for the provincial headquarters of the Islamic Revolution's Guards Corps (IRGC), Khorasani said on Saturday that 16 battalions took part in the first phase of the civil maneuver in the provincial cities of Kerman, Rafsanjan, Zarand, Bardsir and Shahr- Babak. He said 14 battalions held another civil maneuver in Kahnuj, Jiroft, Baft, Sirjan and Bam which was the second phase of the civil maneuver.

Four al-Zahrah battalions comprising female members of the Basij also took part in the maneuver, he said.

Iran: 'Committed' Forces Absence From Elections Deplored

NC1401190096 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 8 Jan 96 pp 1, 16

[First part of a two-part unattributed editorial: "A Discussion on Parties"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The heating up of the Majles election campaign during the past few months has also heated up discussions about parties. Some people point out the need for political activities within the framework of an organization. Others speak about the formation of one or several new parties in the very near future, while others merely assess the various opinions that are voiced.

But the gist of the discussion that has started in society is of importance. It is not clear what justification those who already have organizations and the necessary instruments of power have to offer when they criticize those who bring up this topic. It is true that some of the opinions expressed are half-baked, careless, and far from reality. But, at any rate, there are some things that are necessary when an important political issue is discussed, and the voicing of opinions is one of these things.

An extremely important and noteworthy point, which some of the critics have also referred to, is that the heating up of the discussion on parties does not concern only the elections for the fifth term of the Majles and that it is very late to start organizing for the fifth Majles elections at this point. This is a very good point. And if those who are seeking to form parties do not know, they should realize that they will have nothing to gain at this point and that they are more like playful students who begin thinking about studying for a test on the night before the test. Of course, one may say that it was the nature of yesterday's friendship that dictated that the people who are making preparations to form a party today would think that there is no need for a test, and this is the reason they are excused, to a certain extent, for this delay.

The discussions on the need for the existence and activation of parties is a serious topic that should not be ignored. There are now two groups who are proposing such discussions and then following them up. One group consists of those who are satisfied only by being voted into the Majles. These people do not carry any weight, are basically not taken into consideration, and have no future either. The second group consists of those who have other objectives. This group is actually comprised of people who only pick the fruit when it is ripe and seize the opportunity to prepare the ground to come to power—even if in the long run.

In the midst of this, the independent revolutionary groups who have always proved themselves in all tests without any demands and have offered the greatest service to the revolution and to the nation and have proven that they are of a very high caliber and devoted are missed. Why shouldn't these effective forces be able to enjoy an "organization" that is an effective instrument? If now, once again, the old and tattered issue of giving priority to expertise over commitment is being repeated by many and some of the mass media are making a sly effort to suggest that the Majles needs experts and not commitment, it is actually because the

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unjustified absence of some committed experts from the organizations is being exploited. Today, thanks to the Islamic Revolution, a wide spectrum of committed youths have a high degree of expertise. This wide spectrum of committed experts should enter the arena of healthy political activity. This healthy activity can be in the form of organizations and not be limited to objectives such as mere entry into the Majles.

Iran Majles Speaker Calls For Massive Elections Turnout

LD1801185696 Tehran IRNA in English 1342 GMT 18 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 18, IRNA — Majles Speaker Hojatoleslam 'Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri said here on Thursday people trust officials and those in charge of holding the upcoming parliamentary elections should prepare the ground for manifestation of people's political will against enemies' plots.

In a meeting with governors-general of the provinces, he invited all eligible parties and groupings to running for the fifth parliamentary polls, adding that officials should remove any obstacle in the way of holding "healthy and fair" elections.

He referred to the guidelines of the leader of the Islamic revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed 'Ali Khamene'i concerning the elections and said the leader has made all necessary recommendations in connection with the elections slated for March 8.

He said the announcement of readiness by various parties and groupings to actively participate in the elections is not a political gesture and all those whose hearts beat for Islam and the Islamic revolution should massively turn out in the elections of the fifth parliament.

Nateq Nuri said that the parliament in the Islamic Republic enjoy a high standing and great importance. Majles needs intellect and specialized people owing to its responsibility for approving bills as well as supervising the integrity of affairs of the state.

The Majles speaker said the expertise, commitment to Islam, the Constitution and faith in Velayat-e-Faqih (office of the Supreme Religious Jurisprudent) are among the characteristic which a candidate for parliament should have.

Such a member of parliament could protect the values of the Islamic revolution and the principles drawn by the founder of the Islamic Republic, the late Imam Khomeyni.

Nateq Nuri said election campaign especially in the provincial towns is a matter of course, but, the governors-general should not deal with this competition in a way that it might disappoint the people. instead, he said, the officials should work to encourage people to actively take part in the polls.

He described the forthcoming parliamentary elections as an examination and said that officials responsible for holding the polls should not do any acts for the sake of others that might make them feel ashamed before themselves and the Almighty.

He recommended the governors-general to treat people courteously and added, "if you could not treat people with courtesy, others will come and take the power from you."

Before the Majles speaker, minister of the interior, 'Ali Mohammad Besharati gave a report on the three-day seminar of the governors-general aimed at discussing issues related to the forthcoming elections.

Besharati said it is expected 3,000 candidates would register for the 270-seat parliament.

The seminar of the governors-general wound up its work on Thursday.

Iran Oil Ministry Source Disputes MEES Report of Production Cut

NC1601094696 Paris AFP in English 0850 GMT 16 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan 16 (AFP)—Iran on Tuesday [16 January] denied reports that its oil production had fallen, saying it continued to observe its quota set by the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).

"We have by no means been producing more or less than the 3.6 million barrels per day (bpd) figure set by OPEC," an unidentified source at Iran's oil ministry told Iran daily newspaper.

The source was responding to a report published on Monday in the Middle East Economic Survey (MEES), saying OPEC crude production had fallen in December for the third month in a row mainly due to a cut in Iran's output.

It said Iranian output had been cut to 3.355 million bpd.

Iran's government daily charged for its part that the MEES report was influenced by the United States, which sought to prove that its oil embargo against Iran "was bearing fruit."

Iranian oil industry, built before the 1979 Islamic revolution with American help, is still dependent on the US spare parts.

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The United States has banned any trade with Iranian oil industry as part of its sanctions imposed against Iran in June.

Majles Approves Outlines of Iran's Budget Bill

LD1601160696 Tehran IRNA in English 1519 GMT 16 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 16, IRNA — The Islamic Consultative Assembly (Majlis) in its open session Tuesday afternoon approved the outlines of the next year budget bill. The session was presided over by Majlis Vice-Speaker Hasan Rowhani.

Head of the special Majlis commission on the budget bill Hashem Rahbari said in preparing the bill efforts have been made to bring real incomes into consideration. Supporting the increase in tax rates in the next year budget bill, he stressed that in order not to be dependent on oil revenues, there is no other alternative but to increase taxes.

However, he said, despite the predicted increase in tax income in the next year budget, the rise is below the inflation rate and necessary facilities have been provided for low-income families.

Iran's Rafsanjani Addresses Islamic Propagation Clerics

LD1801132396 Tehran IRNA in English 1252 GMT 18 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 18, IRNA — President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani said here on Thursday those working at the deprived areas of the country to propagate Islam should be equipped with advanced equipment for their publicity work. In a meeting with the clerics of the Islamic Propagation Organization (IPO), the president said working with the IPO is a hard but valuable and blessing job which, if done for the sake of God, will be the most pleasant one.

Addressing the clerics, President Rafsanjani said the country is proceeding with its reconstruction efforts and the deprived areas have undergone considerable development so that the need for propagation of islamic thought there is felt more than ever before.

President Rafsanjani said the clerics serve to promote the Islamic thoughts in every and each part of the country and the people regard the clerics as their guides.

Before the president, deputy chief of the IPO, Hojjat ol-Eslam Sa'idi gave a report on a seminar of clerics based at deprived regions held recently and thanked the government for its efforts for the economic development of the country.

Pakistan

Islamabad Radio Reports Bomb Blast in Lahore Pharmacy

BK1901043796 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 0300 GMT 19 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Nine persons were injured in a bomb explosion in a medical store in main Sadar Bazar, Lahore, last night. The blast completely destroyed the medical store while an adjacent shop was badly damaged.

Bomb Blast Injures Five in Pakistani Pharmacy

BK1801162696 Hong Kong AFP in English 1556 GMT 18 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] LAHORE, Pakistan, Jan 1 (AFP) — Five people were injured late Thursday [18 January] in a bomb blast in Lahore, the second blast there in one day, police said.

The blast destroyed a pharmacy in one of Lahore's main markets, Saddar Bazar.

Earlier in the day, 23 people were injured when a bomb exploded in the library of a Lahore college. Both bombs were locally made, police said.

There has been no claim for either blast.

Islamabad Reports Further on Lahore Library Bomb Blast

BK1801132896 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1314 GMT 18 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Twenty-three students were injured in Lahore today when a bomb exploded in Dayal Singh College library. According to details, several students of the college were studying in the reading room. All of a sudden a big noise was heard, instantly fire broke out, and billows of smoke was seen amid burning magazines and furniture of the reading room. The injured were rushed to Mayo hospital for medical treatment. Our representative, Aslam Hori, quoting police officials said a two-pound bomb was planted by some terrorist with the evil intention of sabotaging the peaceful atmosphere prevailing in educational institutions.

Pakistani Official Files Petition in Coup Case

BK1801131596 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 18 Jan 96 p 10

[Report by Nasir Iqbal in Islamabad]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Chairman Al-Jihad Trust, Habib Wahabul Wahabul Khairi has filed a separate

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petition before the Supreme Court Wednesday praying to implead him as a party in another case for staying the proceedings of the field general court martial of Major General Zaheerul Islam Abbasai.

The earlier petition was filed by the wife of General Abbasai and is pending before the court.

Habib Wahabul Khairi was directed by a bench of the Supreme Court earlier to file a written application when he requested the court to implead him as a party.

In his petition, he submitted that senior army officers had been illegally arrested and were being denied judicial remedy.

The petitioner has made the President, the Prime Minister, the Army chief, the former COAS, [Chief of Army Staff] Lt General Ali Kulli Khattak-Commanding Officer 10 Corp and others respondents in the case.

He contended in his petition that the status of the field court martial general is without any legal grounds in the eyes of the constitution and law. He said that seeking justice through an independent court was a fundamental right of every citizen.

He said that the arrested military officers had been subjected to violence to extort confession and they had been disgraced which was in violation of Articles 9,10 and 14 of the constitution.

He contented that Major General Abbasi was being tried by a court headed by an officer junior to him who was not entitled to hear and decide his case according to the principles of constitution and justice.

He submitted that even before the hearing, exaggerated allegations had already poisoned people about the armed forces which was not only disrespectful to them, but also an open violation of Articles 9 and 14 of the

The petitioner prayed that the court martial be immediately stayed and necessary orders for the protection of fundamental rights be given. He pleaded that the respondents be directed to constitute a court of senior officers, having no prejudice against the defendants, to meet the requirements of law and justice.

He pleded that the proceedings of the court martial be open for journalists, relatives and friends and those interested so that the point of view of the defendants be known to the public.

He contented that army officers and jawans be provided with the facility and education to live according to Islam and defend their motherland with the spirit of Jihad. He said that officers and jawans [soldiers] should not be deprived of jobs after being considered condemned, nor should they be harassed and that any citizen assiting or helping Kashmiri mujahideen should not be condemned or harassed.

Pakistan's Sharif Urges President To Reveal Bhutto's 'Misdeeds'

BK1801140796 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 18 Jan 96 p 12

[Report by Zara Khan in Karachi]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Nawaz Sharif, leader of the opposition and PML-N [Pakistan Muslim League — Nawaz] chief, Wednesday [17 January] said removal of Benazir government is essential to overcome crisis the country is facing.

Talking to journalists at the residence of Majid Sultan Khawaja, shortly after his arrival from Lahore on a day's visit, Nawaz said the patriotic people feel that Benazir's removal is necessary to solve the crises being faced in the fields of economy, lawlessness, killings, Karachi problem and others.

"She is completely out of touch from the realities and facts. In fact the prime minister does not even have the capability to run the affairs of Pakistan," he maintained.

Opposing the agreement of giving Sui gas fields to a private company Nawaz hoped that President Leghari will ensure justice in this regard.

Replying to a question, leader of the opposition said: "We will judge the performance of President Leghari on the basis of his deeds. If he does not take action against the misdeeds of the government it means he is also responsible for the present state of affairs."

"If the president cannot stop the prime minister and her husband from wrong doings, he should at least speak about it," he stressed.

To another question, he said, he had condemned the extra-judicial killings in Karachi and made sincere efforts to forge brotherhood and love among the people of Sindh. He blamed the government for the extra-judicial killings in Karachi. "Muslim League is acting as a bridge between the people of urban and rural areas of Sindh as we do not believe in the policy of divide and rule which is being practiced by the present government. We will save Pakistan and Karachi," the PML leader added.

Criticizing the prime minister, Nawaz said she was not sincere in reaching an agreement with MQM [Muhajir Qaumi Movement] chief Altaf Hussain to solve the Karachi problem rather the PPP [Pakistan People's Party] and its government is creating hatred between the people of urban and rural Sindh like Benazir's father late

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Z A [Zulfikar Ali] Bhutto did in former East Pakistan which led to the dismemberment of the country.

"We do not want and let his daughter to repeat it again and stop her from instigating Sindh is against the people of Karachi. She should refrain from politics of bodies," he remarked.

Leader of the opposition resorted to say that the country was going bankrupt in view of the ill-conceived economic policies of the incompetent government.

Nawaz condemned the promulgation of ordinance pertaining to increase in salaries of prime minister and others. "This is to please the privileged class and deprive the low income groups and down trodden people. It is great injustice to the people, therefore, the ordinance should be withdrawn and the matter should be discussed in parliament," he demanded.

Responding to another question he denied that his party had entered into an agreement or an alliance with the MQM chief Altaf Hussain. He said his meetings with the MQM chief were aimed at solving the Karachi problem and stop the government from further aggravating the situation in this cosmopolitan city.

Asked about the separation between judiciary and administration, Nawaz said the opposition would certainly endorse the stand-point of the legal community in the country and reiterated that the strike of the advocates would be supported by the opposition.

Sri Lanka

Rebels Abandon Eastern Bases in Sri Lankan Offensive

BK1901111796 Hong Kong AFP in English 1057 GMT 19 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] COLOMBO, Jan 19 (AFP) — Tamil Tiger guerrillas have abandoned several jungle bases in eastern Sri Lanka in the face of ground, air and artillery attacks, the military and rebels said Friday [19 January].

Guerrillas of the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) had withdrawn from several hideouts in the eastern coastal district of Batticaloa as elite commandos fanned into the jungles Thursday, officials said.

"There has been no report of any contacts with the enemy so far," a defence source said, but "the search and destroy mission is still in progress. "

Elite army commandos moved against suspected LTTE positions amid monsoon rains which had triggered floods and inundated several low- lying areas, officials said.

For its part, the LTTE in a statement sent here from its London office Friday charged that the military was using air and artillery attacks against civilian targets at the launch of the offensive on Wednesday.

"Two supersonic military aircraft belonging to the Sri Lankan air force also dropped bombs on Vaharai (in the east). The Vaharai hospital received a direct hit," the LTTE said. "Three civilians were seriously wounded."

Defence sources said the latest military action was prompted by a wave of rebel attacks in the eastern region following the fall of the Tigers' main bastion of Jaffna in the north of the country earlier last month.

More than 50 people have been killed in sporadic violence in the east since the LTTE lost Jaffna to security forces after nearly 50 days of fighting that claimed the lives of 500 soldiers and 2,000 rebels by official count.

The Tamil separatist struggle has claimed an estimated 50,000 lives in the past 23 years and all political attempts to appease mino@ity Tamils have failed.

Sri Lankan Troops Fan into Jungles To Hunt Tamil Tigers

BK1801111896 Hong Kong AFP in English 1031 GMT 18 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Colombo, Jan 18 (AFP) — Hundreds of heavily armed soldiers fanned deep into the jungles of eastern Sri Lanka Thursday [18 January] to carry out a major search and destroy mission against Tamil rebels, defence sources here said.

Elite army commandos moved against positions of the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in the eastern district of Batticaloa amid monsoon rains, but there were no immediate reports of confrontations, the sources said.

"The rains somewhat delayed the army action," a defence official said. "Troops are on the move but they are yet to confront the Tigers. The offensive is on a large front."

Chief Military Spokesman Sarath Munasinghe declined to discuss impending action against the LTTE but said measures would be taken soon to neutralise Tiger activities in the island's east.

"Very soon you will see a change in the situation in the east," Munasinghe said. "They are trying their best to try and destabilise normal civilian life by destroying public property. We will deal with that very soon."

Defence sources said the latest military action was prompted by increased rebel attacks in the eastern region

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following the fall of the Tigers' main bastion of Jaffna in the north of the country earlier last month.

Fifty people have been killed in the east since the LTTE lost Jaffna to security forces after nearly 50 days of fighting that official figures say claimed the lives of 500 soldiers and 2,000 rebels.

More than 50,000 people have died in the separatist struggle in the past 23 years and all political attempts to appease minority Tamils have ended in failure.

Sri Lankan Media Urged Not To Publish News Harming Country's Unity

BK1801131996 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 18 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The deputy defense minister, Colonel Anuruddha Ratwatte, has appealed to the media not to publish news which will harm the unitary status of the country. He said that the press censorship was imposed earlier to help [words indistinct], however, this censorship has now been removed and the government has strengthened the media freedom.

Col. Ratwatte regretted the fact that certain sections of the press publish news which would benefit the enemy and threaten the unitary status of our country in the name of media freedom. He appealed to the media to stop this unpatriotic action and to act in a responsible manner.

Speaking at a ceremony held to receive donations to the National Defense Fund, the deputy defense minister pledged to create an environment where all communities in the country should live in peace and harmony before the forthcoming Sinhala and Hindu new year. In response to questions posed by contributors to the National Defense Fund, Col. Ratwatte said that a center would be set up to sell the products of disabled soldiers from the Ranavirusevana [soldiers welfare organization]. The Army Hospital will set up a special unit to treat patients of families of soldiers engaged in military operations. The Sudu Nello [welfare] movement would assist these families in resolving the housing problems and in providing bank loans.

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